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Mormon Temple Architecture and the Spaces of Ritual

Michael Henry Marcheschi

Bachelor of Science in Construction Management
Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah - August 1993



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Submitted to the Department of Architecture in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree Master of Architecture at the
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, June 1999.

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Detail from *The Israelites Passing Through the Wilderness*, by William West.

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abstract

Temples are the most significant religious buildings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In the early days of the church, temples were used for general worship and congregation. These temples represented the spiritual and physical heart of the communities in which they were built. As the theology of the church evolved, temples took on a more restricted function—the performance of sacred ordinances. Mormons believe that these ordinances are necessary to prepare individuals to return to the presence of God. In the church today the temple is seen as the pinnacle of a member's worship and to attend the temple a sign of one's commitment and worthiness.

In this thesis I propose that, as the most significant structures built by the church, temples could be designed such that the form and arrangement of the ritual spaces reinforce to a greater degree the clarity of Mormon doctrine and the spiritual quality of the temple ordinances. In addition, the design of our temples could be more religiously symbolic and clear yet culturally neutral thus allowing for local design intervention and participation from the church's diverse membership.

This thesis has been the vehicle to explore the possibilities of Mormon temple architecture. The final product is not a building model to be replicated en masse but rather the design of a building type that has the potential to inspire numerous variations. What is most important is that the spaces of ritual are clearly defined and meaningfully associated so that the temple patron can be taught and inspired in the House of the Lord.

thesis supervisor :

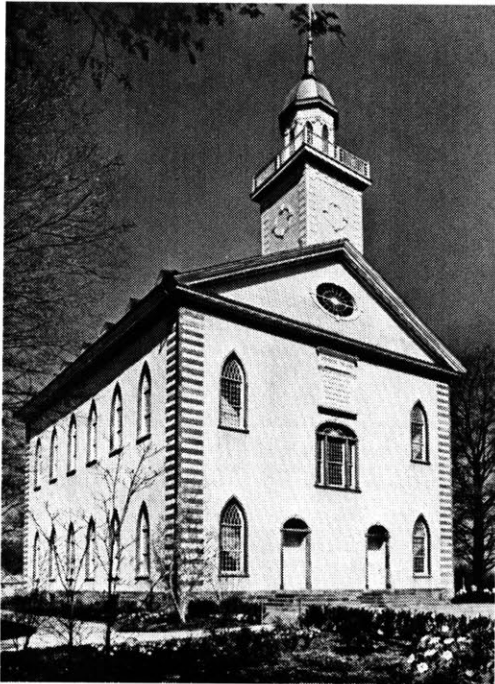
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introduction



Kirtland, Ohio Temple.

13.1

In humility and respect I approach the topic of temples. This is a very sensitive issue for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or Mormons, as they are commonly known. Temples are the most significant religious buildings of the Church. In the early days of the church, temples were used for general worship and congregation. These temples represented the spiritual and physical heart of the communities in which they were built. As the theology of the church evolved, temples took on a more restricted function—the performance of sacred ordinances. Mormons believe that these ordinances are necessary to prepare individuals to return to the presence of God. In the church today the temple is seen as the pinnacle of a member's worship and to attend the temple a sign of one's commitment and worthiness.

Temples continue to be the center of the religious life of the communities in which they are built. Because of the sacred nature of the temple and the ordinances performed therein many members of the church are reluctant to discuss the temple ceremony or any related topic. This thesis is not an exposé of the Mormon temple ceremony. I believe that the ceremony and covenants of the temple are sacred and thus I will treat the subject with respect and delicacy. All the information contained in this thesis regarding the temple ceremony and the respective spaces of ritual has been published by the Church itself or by

those known as General Authorities of the Church. Much of the information is also contained in the scriptures and can also be deduced from images of temples and their interiors provided by the Church to the general public.

This has been a very enlightening and significant endeavor in my life. I chose the topic of Mormon temple architecture because it truly interested me and because I saw the opportunity to contribute to a topic which has not been fully explored. Temple decisions are reserved for the prophet and president of the Church yet each of us has been blessed with a mind and talents which we have covenanted to use for the building of the kingdom. Temple design has not always originated with the prophet. Many of our existing temples were designed by architects chosen from competitions. This process of selection allowed for the involvement and contribution from common members of the church who had architectural capabilities. The temples produced by this process are some of the most architecturally significant. This thesis is simply my contribution and offering to the church and its endeavor to build sacred architecture.



Washington, D.C. Temple.

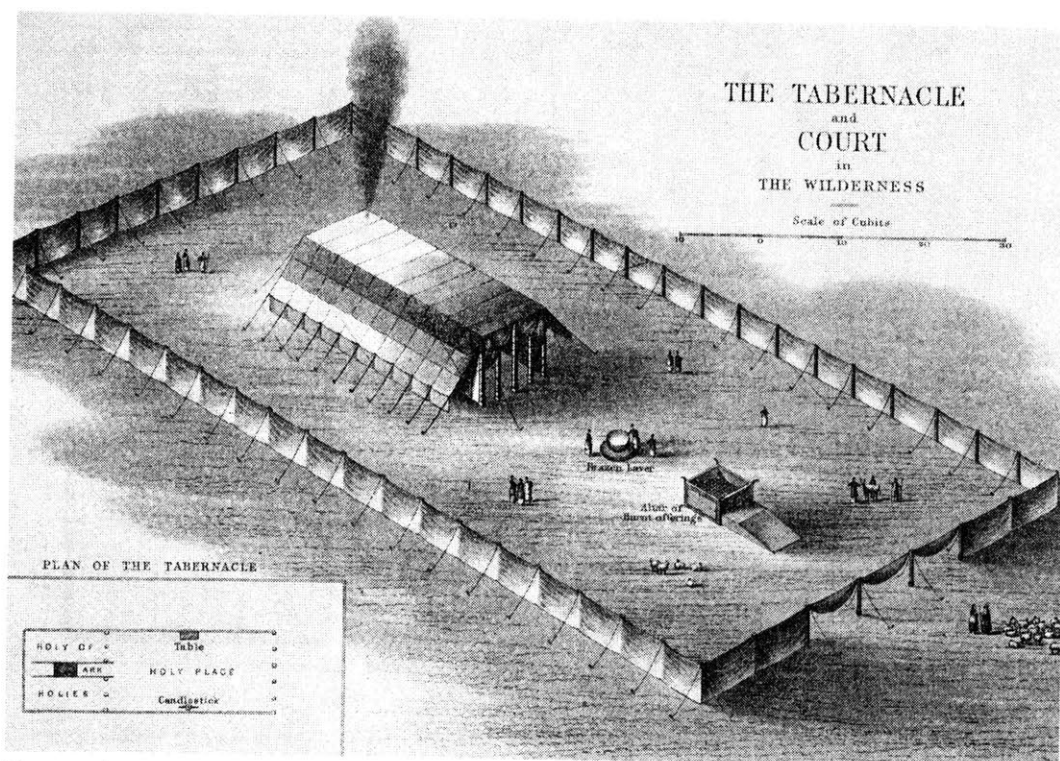
| 4. |

In this thesis I propose that, as the most significant structures built by the church, temples could be designed such that the form and arrangement of the ritual spaces reinforce to a greater degree the clarity of Mormon doctrine and the spiritual quality of the temple ordinances. In addition, the design of our temples could be more religiously symbolic and clear yet culturally neutral thus allowing for local design intervention and participation from the church's diverse membership.

This thesis has been the vehicle to explore the possibilities of Mormon temple architecture. The final product is not a building model to be replicated en masse but rather the design of a building type that has the potential to inspire numerous variations. What is most important is that the spaces of ritual are clearly defined and meaningfully associated so that the temple patron can be taught and inspired in the House of the Lord.

Following is a brief history of temple building and the significance of temples. I will then discuss my design methodology and the resulting building.

the significance of temples and building precedents



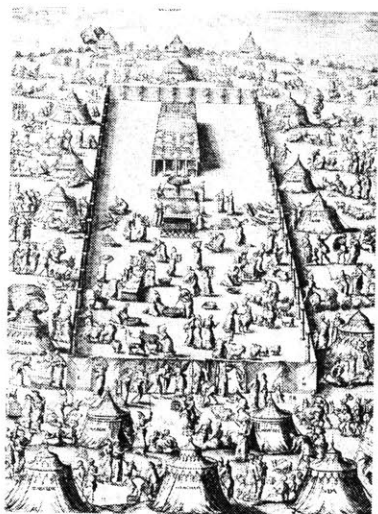
Nineteenth century reconstruction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

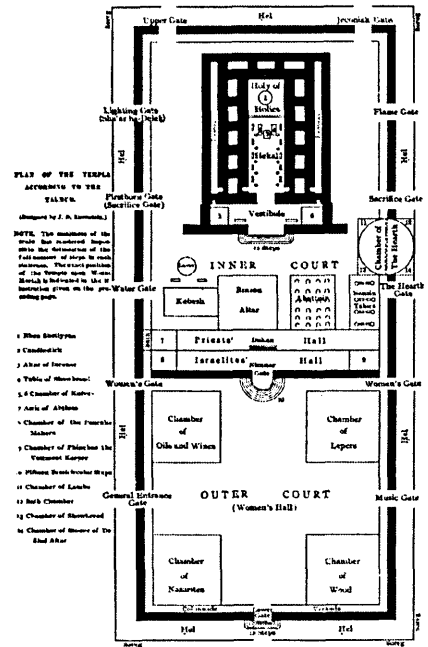
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Ancient Temples

Temples, both ancient and modern, are structures designed to separate the sacred from the profane—places for the meeting of heaven and earth. The most primitive temple, but in some ways the most ideal, was the mountaintop to which one ascended to draw physically closer to God. The act of ascension and circumambulation through physical exertion challenged and prepared the devotee for communion. Indeed many ancient temples were either built on or resembled a mountain. Vertical distance provided a degree of separation from the profane that existed at ground level. Among the children of Israel a portable temple or tabernacle was used in their travels in the wilderness to allow for the definition of the varying degrees of sacred space as one approached the Holy of Holies or the place where God dwelt. What is remarkable about this temple is the porosity of the defining layers. The layers were of fabric and as such allowed for the transmission of sound and scent while shielding visual infiltration. In this way the temple was not merely an object in space but a vivid and sensory structure which served to fully remind the children of Israel of their covenant relationship with God. Similarly the temples of Solomon and Herod in Jerusalem provided a very physical and monumental reminder of this covenant relationship and of God's presence among His people. That which is common to each is the idea that through architecture and interventions in the land-

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16.1 Plan of Herod's Temple according to the Talmud.

scape men attempted to define levels of sacred space and allow the architecture to reinforce the essential message of the presence of deity in the community.

On another level the temple and the ordinances or rites performed within its layers were deeply symbolic of the physical and spiritual preparation required before introduction into the presence of God. The animal sacrifices performed in these early Jewish temples were also symbolic of the eventual sacrifice and death of the Messiah to pay for the sins of all mankind.

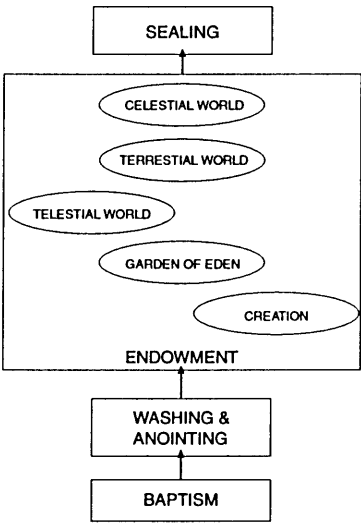
Significance of Temples

Mormonism is based on the Judeo-Christian tradition. After years of apostasy, or a distancing of God and man, Mormons believe that God once again instituted temple worship. They also believe that the temples they construct are modern-day counterparts to these earlier Biblical temples.

The Mormons have built temples from the beginning of the Church. Even in the most difficult of times they erected these structures. Within the temple sacred ordinances are performed. These ordinances are sequential and include baptism and confirmation, washing and anointing, endowment, and sealing, in this order. The performance of these ordinances is essential for each individual to return to the presence of God. Thus, each person attends the temple and participates in these ordinances for themselves one time in their life. Subsequently these members are encouraged to return to the temple as often as possible to perform ordinances vicariously for those who have died without receiving these necessary and saving rites. When doing vicarious work, temple patrons may perform one or some or all of the ordinances. For instance, they may choose to perform only the endowment ordinance as long as the preparatory ordinances have been completed. The subsequent visits serve not only to perform the necessary work for others

but also allow for continued instruction and reminding of one's own temple covenants. The temple also provides a place of refuge from the world and a place for quiet contemplation.

Temple Ordinances



Temple ordinance diagram.

Baptism is the first ordinance performed in the temple. In temples today this ordinance is reserved only for vicarious work. Living members are baptized in fonts located in local meetinghouses or in other bodies of water. Baptism by immersion is symbolic of the death and rebirth of an individual echoing the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As such, the water represents cleansing, sustenance, burial and life. Baptism is the first step on the path upward. After an individual is baptized he or she is confirmed a member of the Church and commanded to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The second ordinance performed in the temple is the ritual washing with water and anointing with oil preparatory to participating in the endowment ceremony.

The third ordinance of the temple is the endowment. "The Endowment of 'power from on high' in modern temples has four main aspects. First is the preparatory ordinance, a ceremonial washing and anointing, after which the temple patron dons the sacred clothing of the temple. Second is a course of instruction by lectures and representations. These include a recital of the most prominent events of the Cre-

ation, a figurative depiction of the advent of Adam and Eve and of every man and every woman, the entry of Adam and Eve into the Garden of Eden, the consequent expulsion from the garden, their condition in the world, and their receiving of the Plan of Salvation leading to the return to the presence of God The Endowment instructions utilize every human faculty so that the meaning of the gospel may be clarified through art, drama, and symbols. All participants wear white temple robes symbolizing purity and the equality of all persons before God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. The temple becomes a house of revelation whereby one is instructed more perfectly 'in theory, in principle, and in doctrine' 'This completeness of survey and expounding of the gospel plan makes temple worship one of the most effective methods of refreshing the memory concerning the entire structure of the gospel' Third is making covenants. The temple Endowment is seen as the unfolding or culmination of the covenants made at baptism. Temple covenants give 'tests by which one's willingness and fitness for righteousness may be known' They include the 'covenant and promise to observe the law of strict virtue and chastity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth and the uplifting of the [human] race; to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation

that the earth may be made ready to receive...Jesus Christ' One also promises to keep these covenants sacred and to 'trifle not with sacred things' Fourth is a sense of divine presence."¹

Until 1955 the endowment ceremony was performed by live actors in a series of distinct rooms representing the creation, the Garden of Eden, the world in which we now live, the terrestrial world (a return to a paradisiacal state), and the celestial world. With the expansion of the Church beyond the United States and the problem of presenting the endowment in multiple languages, the Church made the decision to consolidate the first four rooms into one media room where the endowment ceremony was presented by film. The Celestial Room has always remained separate. All temples built since this time rely upon multiple media ordinance rooms to present the endowment.

The fourth ordinance of the temple is the sealing ordinance. This ordinance makes eternal the family bonds between husband and wife and between parents and children. In this way the whole human family is eventually linked to one another. Mormons are taught the im-

¹ Ludlow, Daniel H., ed. *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Vol. 2, "Endowment"

portance of the family unit in the eternal scheme and especially of the marriage covenant. Mormons believe that the marriage relationship is not only for time here on earth but also for eternity. If the marriage is performed in the temple by one having the proper authority from God, and if the individuals remain true and faithful to the covenants that they make in the temple then a husband and wife will remain such forever. The sealing ordinance is the pinnacle of temple ordinances.

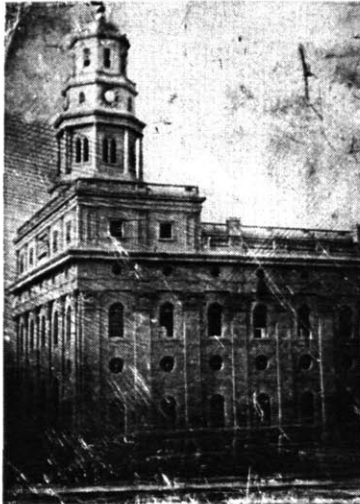
Form and Function

In the function and organization of space, Mormon temples are distinguished from the religious edifices of other denominations and religions. There is often not a large central space in which everyone gathers to be taught or directed, or to pray. These functions take place in the Church's chapels, tabernacles and meetinghouses. Rather the temple is composed of a series of smaller spaces whose décor and architecture reinforce the message being presented and the symbolic nature of the ritual. As a building type Mormon temples are unique. The temples incorporate spaces not only for worship and ritual but also spaces for clothing distribution, laundry, food preparation, child-care, lockers, administration and audio/video requirements.

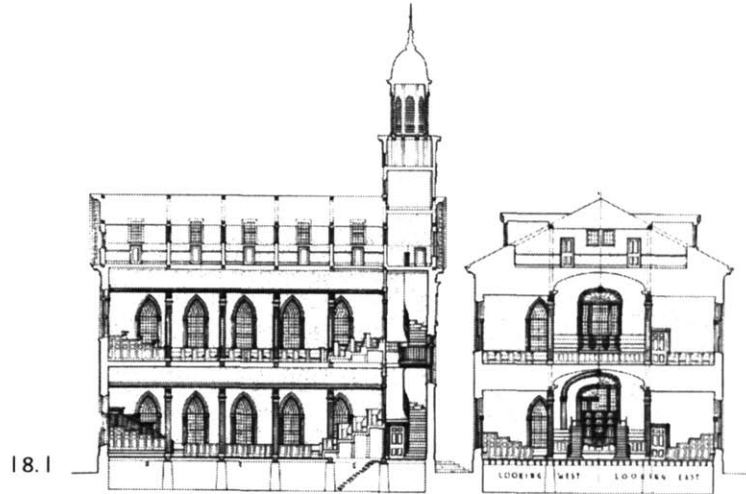
Mormon temples are generally oriented on an East/West axis. The number of floors and the activities performed on each are all part of the thoughtful ritual. The exact layout and sequence of spaces have evolved over time. There is a sequence of "event spaces" intertwined with numerous "support spaces. " In earlier temples the progression from one space to the next was symbolic of man's birth and progression through life and into the afterlife. Along the way he was taught principles and doctrines which were believed to be essential to his salvation. In some temples, this progression still exists and starts at the

lowest elevation of the temple and proceeds vertically through a series of rooms. In the more modern temples this progression takes place in the same room with changes made in the lighting to differentiate between the different states of existence. The culminating spatial and religious experience of all temples is the arrival at the Celestial Room. This room is symbolic of entering heaven and the presence of God. It is the most beautifully decorated and most light-filled room in the temple.

In many ways the temple is viewed as a refuge from the world and upon entering all signs of a person's life on the outside are removed. Everyone changes from their street clothes into clothing which is completely white, symbolizing purity and equality. There are no transparent windows to allow for a visual connection to or distraction from the outside. Rather light enters through the windows and glows from within. There is a peace and serenity and a general feeling of mutual respect and love for those around you. I believe these attributes are directly influenced by the architecture itself.

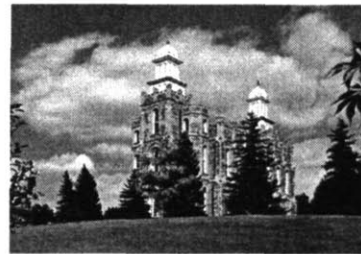


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Above left: Nauvoo, Illinois Temple. Above right: the longitudinal and cross sections of the Kirtland Temple. Right: Logan, Utah Temple. Below top: Salt Lake City, Utah Temple. Below bottom: Creation Room, Salt Lake City, Utah Temple.



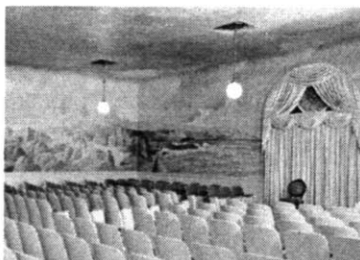
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Modern Temples

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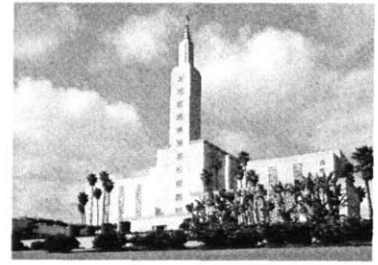
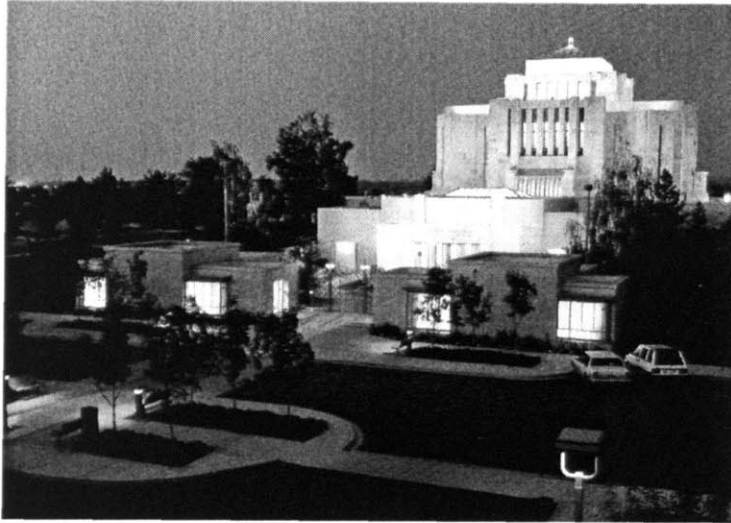


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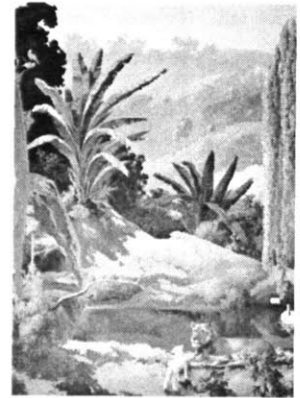


I do not give a full history of Mormon temple design and construction in this thesis. For those wanting such, I would recommend the resources listed in the bibliography. There are certain issues and architectural milestones, however, which do deserve mention in relation to this thesis.

In 1836 the Mormons dedicated their first temple in Kirtland, Ohio. This first temple was built as a place of congregation and was divided into two large assembly halls. The Nauvoo, Illinois temple, dedicated in 1846, marked an evolution in temple design. Although this structure also had two assembly rooms, the attic space was reserved for the performance of the washing and anointing, endowment, and sealing ordinances. The exterior form of these first two temples was consistent with the function of assembling. Both resembled New England style churches. With the construction of the next temples in Utah in St. George, Logan, Manti, and Salt Lake City, one sees a marked shift from assembly hall-style temples toward an interior plan organized for the purpose of performing the ordinances. The fortified exteriors of the Utah temples imply a permanence and determination to be driven no further as the Mormons were from many places in the East.



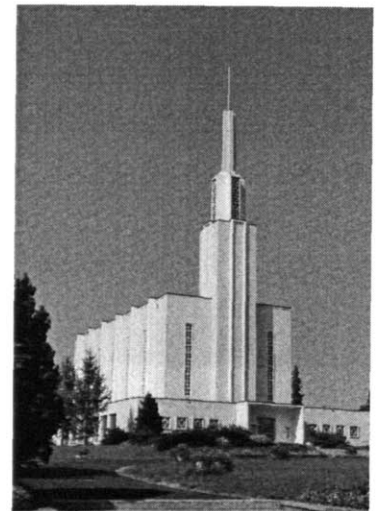
I 12. | Above left: Alberta, Canada Temple. Above right: Los Angeles, California Temple. Right: Garden Room, Los Angeles, California Temple. Below: Swiss Temple.



I 14. |

During the first two decades of the twentieth century the Church built two temples outside of the continental United States. In the third decade the Church built the Arizona temple. These three temples were daringly modern for their time and were designed by architects chosen by competition. The Hawaii, Alberta, and Arizona temples are architectural jewels in the Church. These temples were focused on the presentation of the ordinances. The arrangement of the spaces of ritual was thoughtful and logical in each and reinforced and heightened the spiritual experience of the participants. Modern renovations to each of these structures has attempted to make up for shortcomings in their original designs with regard to support spaces and in so doing have altered the original circulation flow. These three temples are the only temples built devoid of steeples.

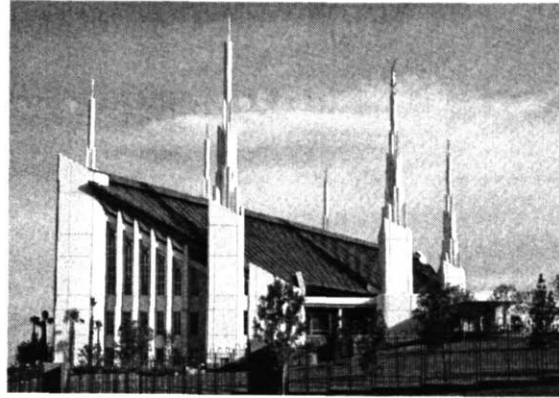
The Idaho Falls, Idaho temple and the Los Angeles temple were the last of the multiple endowment room temples. With the building of the Swiss temple in 1955 the Church commenced performing the ordinance of the endowment in a single media room with the accompaniment of a movie. This allowed the Church to distribute versions of the movie in different languages and thus reduce the number of temple workers needed to enact the ceremony. Similar temple designs were built in New Zealand and London.



I 15. |



| 16. |



| 17. |

Above left: Oakland, California Temple. Above right: Las Vegas, Nevada Temple. Right: Orlando, Florida Temple. Below: St. Louis, Missouri Temple.



| 18. |

Each temple built since 1958 has used the single media endowment room scheme to perform the endowment ordinance. Some temples have more than one media endowment room so that multiple sessions can be conducted at the same time.

In an effort to reduce design and construction costs the Church has elected to build “families” of temples-groups of similar design- and then modify them slightly depending on local materials and culture. This has allowed for many more temples to be built.

Most recently the president and prophet of the Church, Gordon B. Hinckley, announced an unprecedented drive to build smaller temples in more remote locations around the world. At the time of writing the Church has fifty-six operating temples worldwide and an additional fifty-two temples at some stage of planning or construction. All those planned and under construction were announced within the last four years and most within the last year.



| 19. |

observations and concerns

In the following section I will briefly outline some observations and concerns as they relate to the state of temples today. While I was unable to address all of these issues within the scope of this thesis, I think that they are valid concerns and worthy of broader discussion. The following is meant to be a constructive critique of the status quo and give me direction in terms of my design development.

The concerns that I have fall into two groups. In one group are issues relating to the interior organization and relationships of the spaces used for the performance of the ordinances. In the other group are issues relating to how temples are experienced and understood from the exterior.

The primary function of Mormon temples is to teach and provide a place for the performance of sacred ordinances. The temple ritual teaches one how to become like God. The temple ritual is logical and straightforward yet depending on one's own spiritual preparation and condition the ritual can be understood on multiple levels. The architecture of the temples could serve to reinforce and clarify the beauty of the doctrine underlying the temple ritual. The building forms, as understood from both the exterior and interior could have a symbolic basis that is understood and appreciated by the membership of the Church world-

wide. In addition, the relationship between the different ordinances could be made clearer through the arrangement of the ritual spaces relative to one another.

28 | The act of moving from room to room during the endowment could be reinstated to further clarify the teachings of the endowment and heighten the spiritual experience of the temple patron. This would not preclude the use of the movie presentation of the endowment. Different sequential parts could be viewed in each successive room. This is currently done in the newly renovated Alberta temple and works quite well. The point is that the consolidation of the endowment ceremony from four rooms to one (excluding the Celestial Room) was primarily a response to the need to offer the endowment in several languages. This is not an important consideration today with the use of modern audio-visual capabilities. The act of physically moving from one room to the next is symbolic of ascension toward heaven and surely something poetic and spiritually significant is lost when that transition from state to state is marked simply by turning up the lights.

In the temples built today there is not a clear understanding of how the spaces of ritual are related to one another. For example, in most temples the baptismal font is located in the basement. Yet the

temple patron can rarely see this first and very important step in the sequence of ordinances. Think how meaningful it would be to enter the temple to participate in the endowment ordinance and before beginning, have the opportunity to see into the font area and watch the individuals performing vicarious baptisms. Immediately one would be made aware of the larger picture and the building would come alive with activity and purpose.

Moving from issues of the interior spaces to the appearance of the exterior, Mormon temples are very visible. Often they are built along major highways and thoroughfares. What makes a temple identifiable as a Mormon building? What is there that is common to all? Many temples are topped by spires but differ in number and height. Is a spire a necessary addition to the temple even when the massing of the building would indicate otherwise (e.g. Hong Kong)? The most identifiable characteristic of most Mormon temples is the addition of the statue of the Angel Moroni. This statue, while symbolically rich, is a confusing icon that dilutes the true nature and identity of the Church. The image of the Angel Moroni was first used atop the Nauvoo temple in a relatively small weather vane. When placed at the highest pinnacle of our most sacred buildings the statue takes on an importance that is not commen-

surate with the overall message of the Gospel. Why does the Church need an icon atop its temples? There must be other ways of identifying our temples than with the Angel Moroni.

Some other questions and issues relating to the exterior which I contemplated—but did not fully address—while designing are how scale and monumentality relate to the image the Church wishes to portray. How are they related to the religious experience of persons attending the temple? How do they affect the sense of importance and sacred nature of the place? Does the size of the building influence the degree of reverence that a temple patron feels? How should the church respond to the practical considerations (i.e., church growth and distribution of resources) when considering scale? In an effort to economize and disperse temples around the world does the Church risk devaluing the image of the Church, the religious experience of the participants and the sacred nature of the buildings themselves? Does the scale of the temple affect its monumentality? In other words, can the Church build smaller temples and maintain a sense of monumentality? With the announcement of the smaller temple designs, how will the Church differentiate between its temples and meetinghouses? Will the distinction break down architecturally? Is the addition of the statue of the Angel Moroni enough? What happens when the density of members

necessitates the expansion of the smaller temples? Will they be expanded or will another one be built? Is the Church concerned with the replication of the same basic design so many times? Is it possible that when these structures are completed that their similarity and quantity will make them less valued?

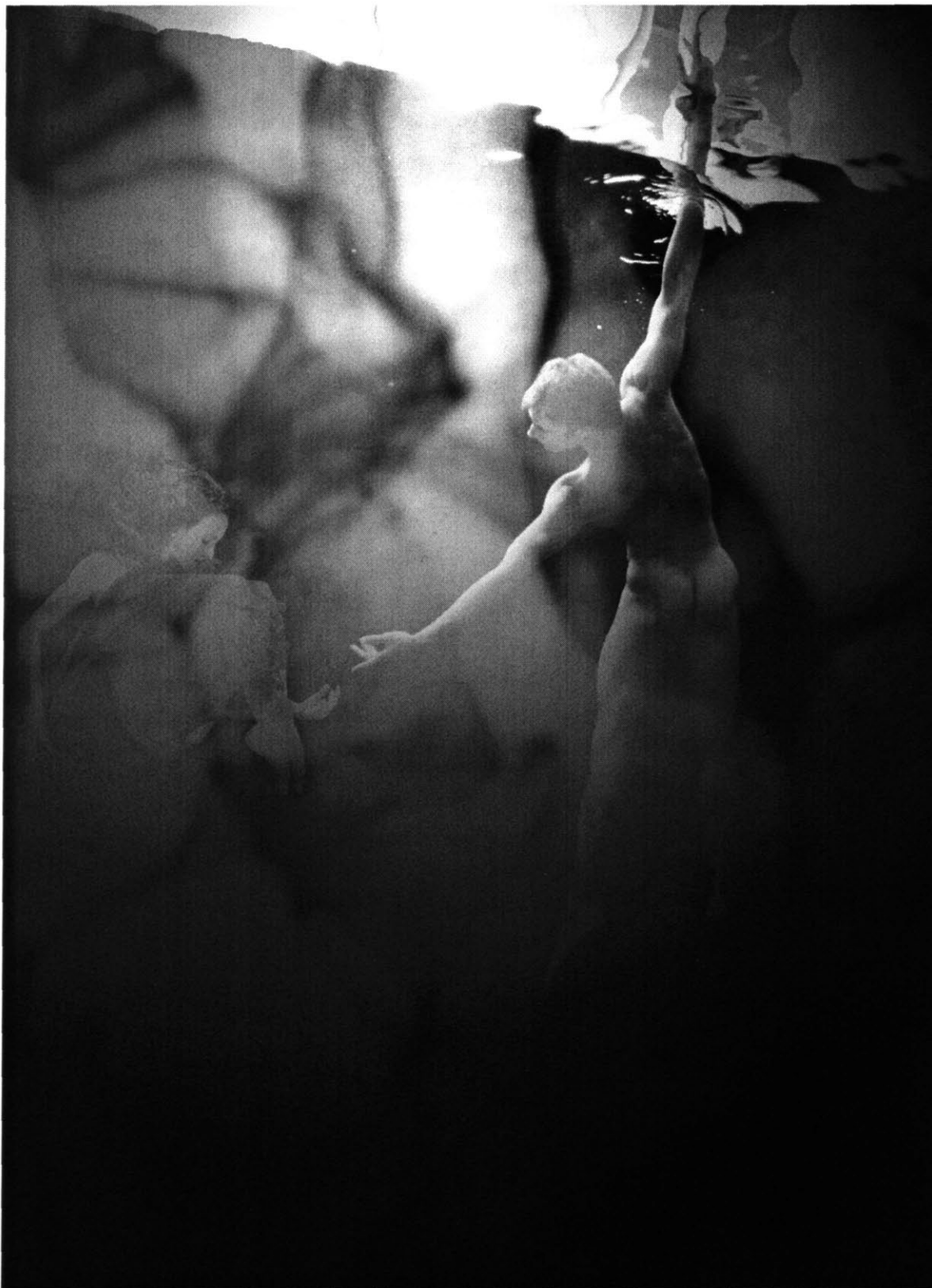
Again, this thesis does not attempt to respond to the many questions and concerns posed above. I do not presume to speak for the Church nor do I intend responses in my thesis to be construed as the only right way to respond to these concerns. These observations and concerns were made primarily to help give me a starting point and direction for the development of my design methodology.

design methodology

As a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints I have relied a great deal on my own experience with temples in the development of this thesis. I have visited many temples in North America and abroad and have always been impressed by the faith, sacrifice and talent of those that build temples. I have also read all I could find on the topic of ancient and modern-day temples. These readings made very clear the importance of temples and temple work throughout history. They also helped me place modern-day temples within the larger framework of temple building.

From my experiences with temples I identified significant architectural issues in our current temples that were effective in reinforcing the spirit of the temple ritual and which were helpful in communicating a basic symbolic form.

Concurrently, I looked for images that would help to inspire new ways of giving physical form to the spiritually intangible. One of the first things I did was to make photo collages that represented spiritual ideas associated with the temple. These collages were helpful exercises in identifying key spiritual concepts that could influence the architectural massing and arrangement of the temple.



120.1 Savior.



| 21. | Prayer.

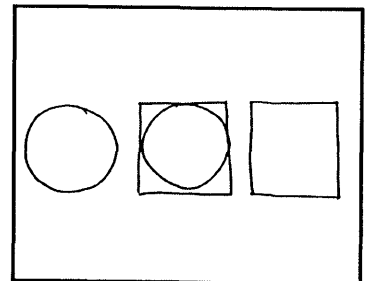




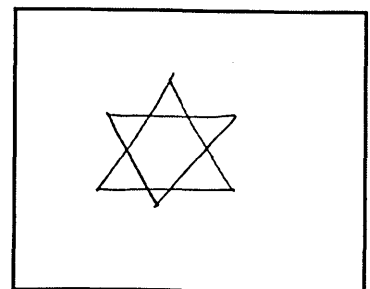
Afterward, I tried to identify symbols that were clear and elemental that might form the basis for an architectural form or expression. I identified many symbols that have religious significance in the Mormon faith but I was attracted to the ones that attempted to describe both the essence of a temple and man's relationship to God. The temple truly is the joining place of heaven and earth. It is the place where past, present, and future meet. The circle and the square are the most fundamental symbols associated with heaven and earth, respectively. The circle inscribed in the square is symbolic of the temple, the place where heaven and earth meet.² In addition, if one considers the respective instruments used to draw these two shapes, namely the architect's compass and square, then it is even clearer why these shapes are appropriate for modern-day temples. These symbols were helpful in both the plan and section development of the building.

I was also attracted to the symbolic nature of the six-pointed star commonly known as the Star of David. The crossing triangles are symbolic of the interaction between God and man. This symbol was influential in the early sectional design phase.

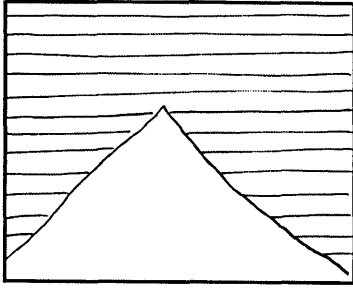
² Nibley, Hugh. *Temple and Cosmos*. Chapter 4: "The Circle and the Square, 139-173.



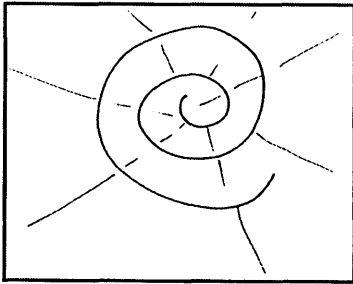
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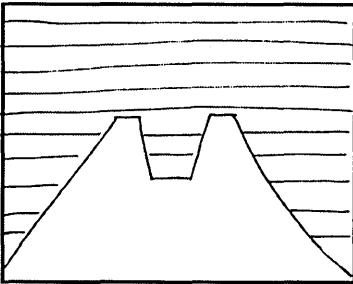
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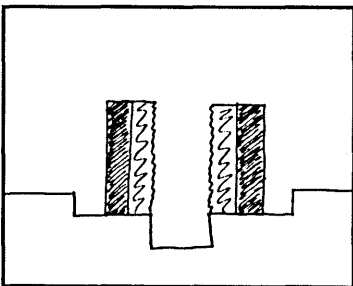
sacred mountain.



ascension.



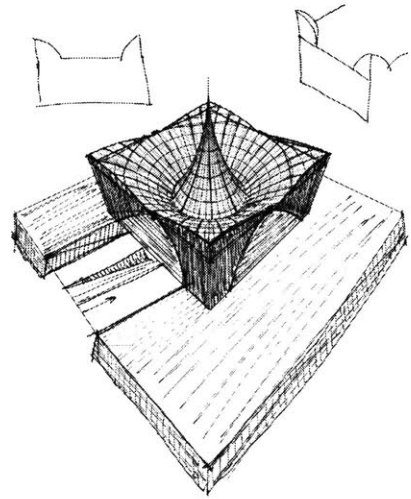
containing the sky.



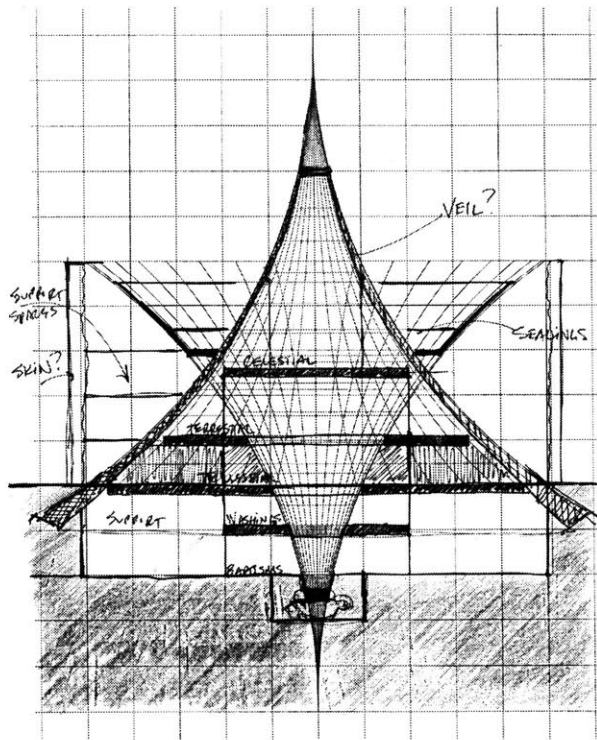
the sacred and the profane.

In addition, I was inspired by the image of the primitive temple or the mountaintop to which one ascended to commune with God. The act of ascension and circumambulation were key in my design. I was fascinated by the interaction between the protruding mountain and the sky wrapping down around the pinnacle. I was also interested in how one could begin to contain the sky or bring it down into the building.

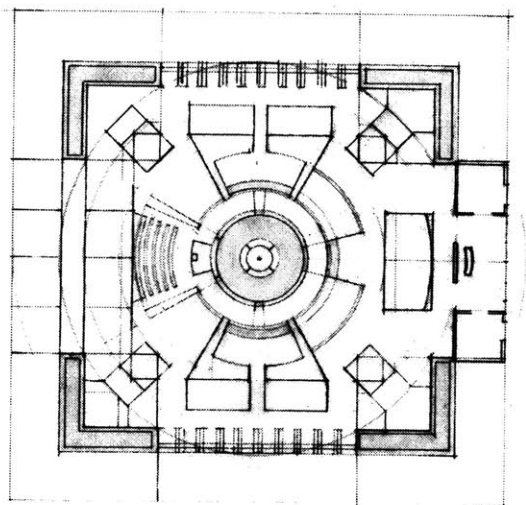
One of the most fundamental reasons for climbing to the top of a mountain to commune with God was that the vertical distance naturally separated the sacred higher levels from the profane lower levels. This idea of defining sacred space was utilized both vertically and horizontally in my design.



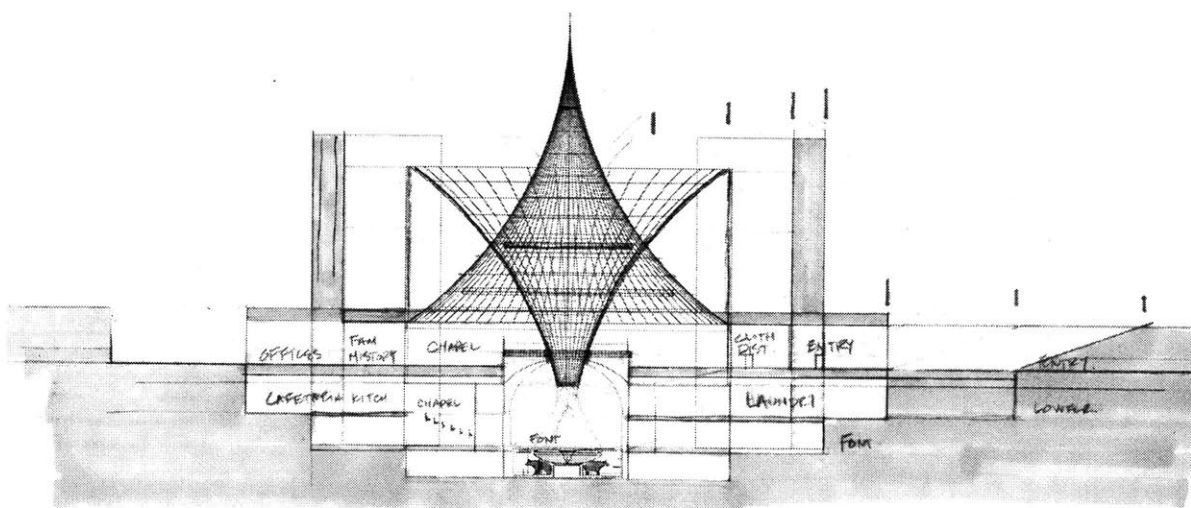
Design sketches for mid-term review.



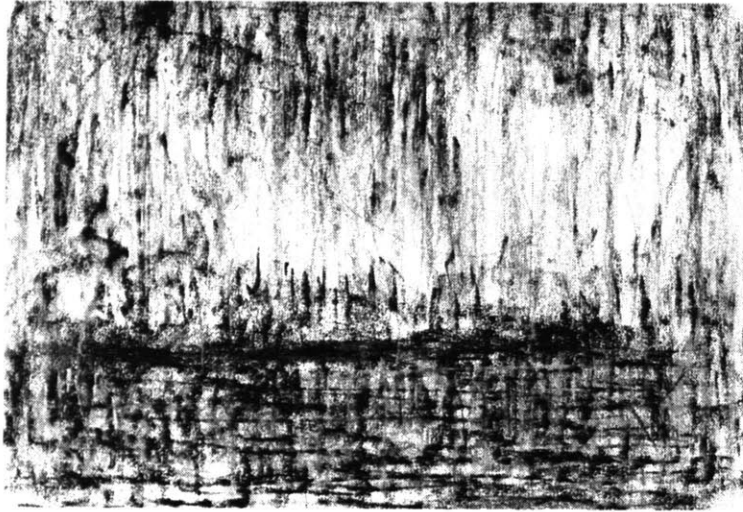
Following this initial period of distillation and research for appropriate symbolic forms I spent several weeks sketching and modeling my first diagrammatic and architectural responses to the problem. These initial sketches and models were very influential in helping to organize the program and evaluate the appropriateness of my initial responses.



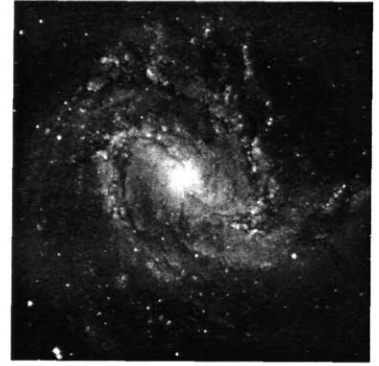
Design sketches for mid-term review.



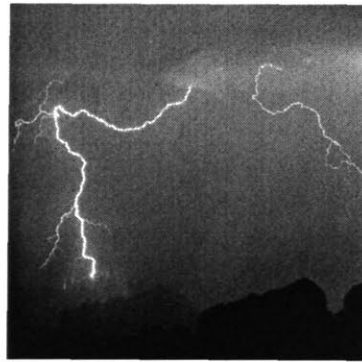
After a mid-term review with my thesis committee members I was able to move forward into more vigorous design development. I also determined that I was going to have to edit out much of what I had originally wanted to explore in this thesis. My committee and I decided that the path and experience of the temple patron was the most important issue of the thesis and that I should concentrate my efforts in developing the spaces associated with the temple ritual.



The Creation.

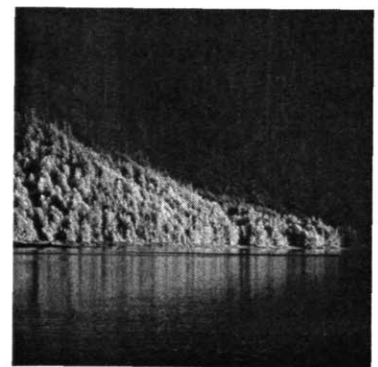


| 24. |



| 25. |

At this time I made five large pastel drawings which attempted to describe the feeling of each of the five spaces associated with the endowment ceremony. These drawings captured in both color and mark the sensorial qualities I envisioned for these spaces. In addition I found images associated with the content of the endowment ceremony that were also suggestive of the potential architecture of the endowment spaces.



| 26. |

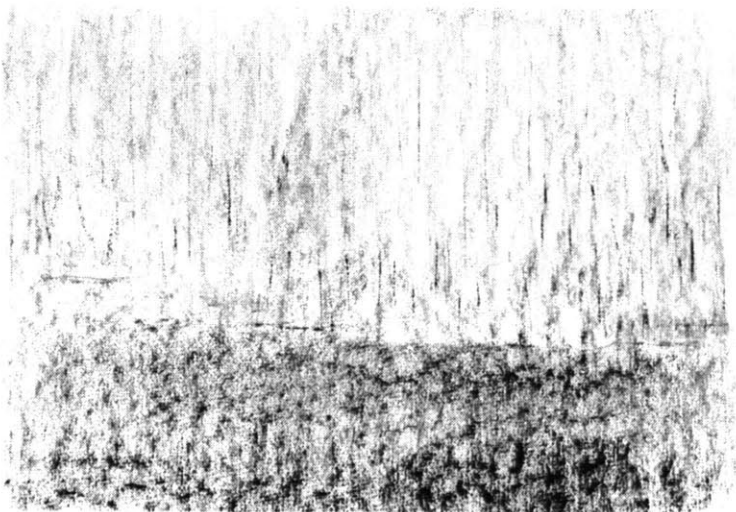


| 27. |



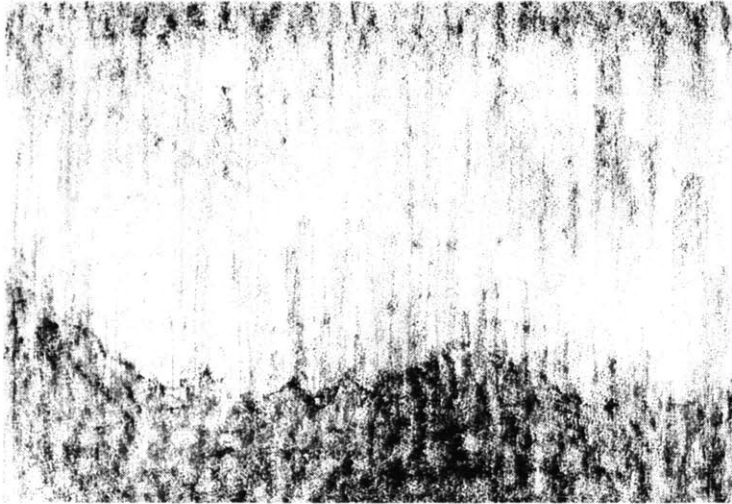
| 28. |

The Garden.



| 29 |

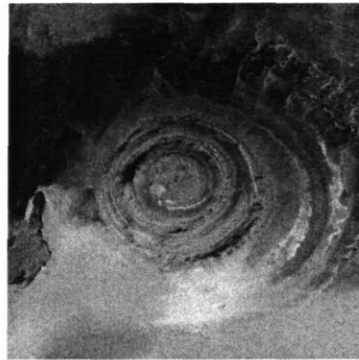




The World.



| 30. |

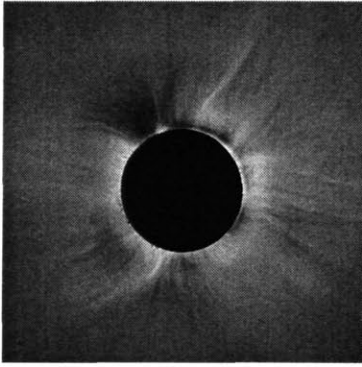


| 31. |

During the following month I edited and refined my design in preparation for my content review. After the content review, I spent my time further refining and modeling the building in the computer. Using the computer at this point in my design process was helpful because it allowed me to make minor adjustments and design decisions without having to rebuild a physical model each time. This computer model also formed the basis for my final presentation drawings.



| 32. |



133. I

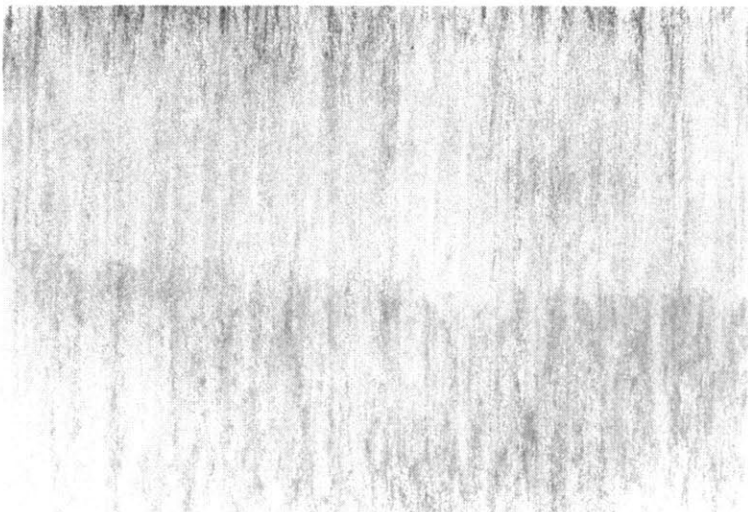


The Celestial World.

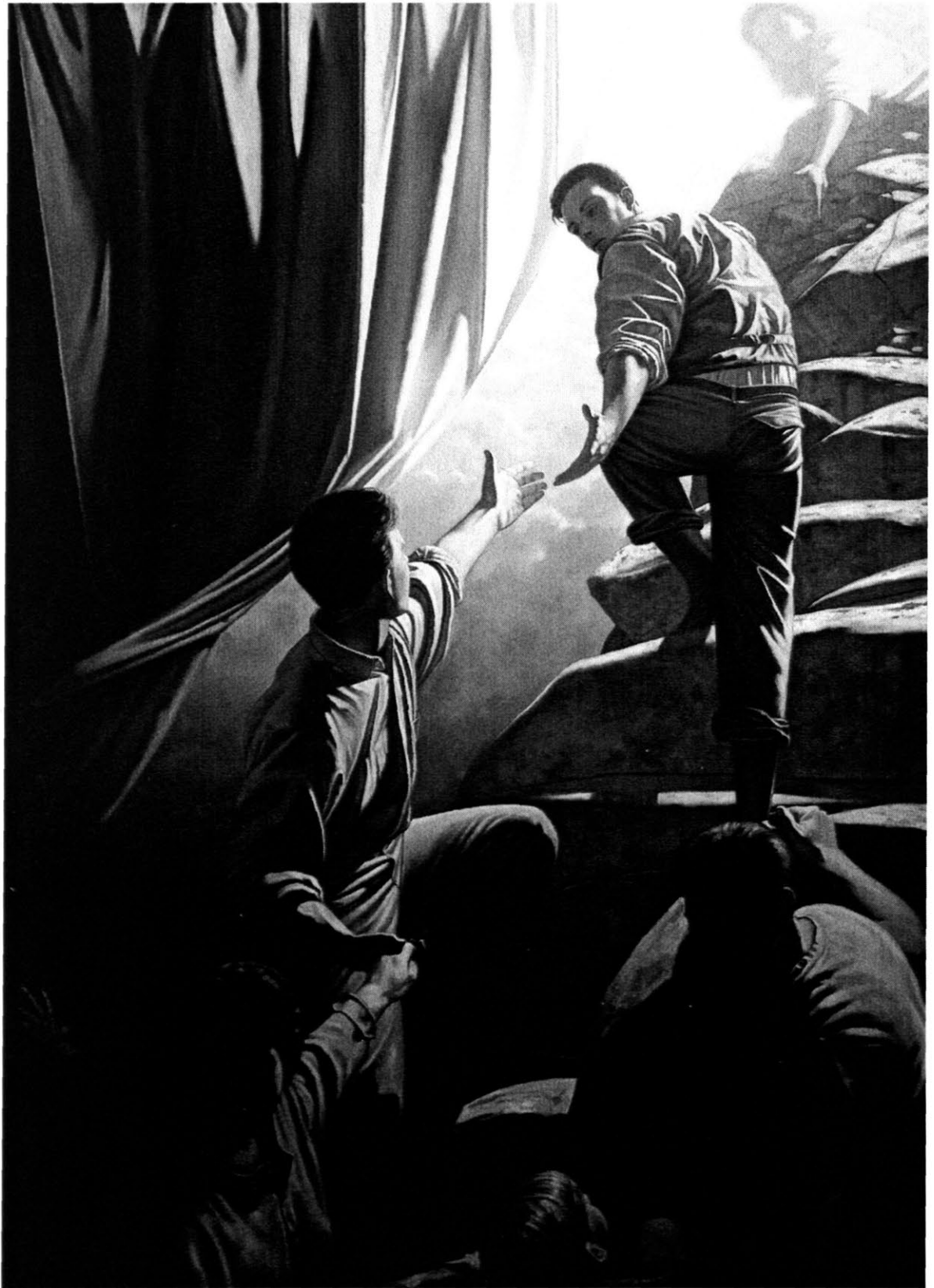


134. I

The Terrestrial World.



135. I



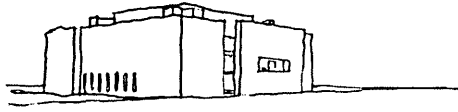


the final project

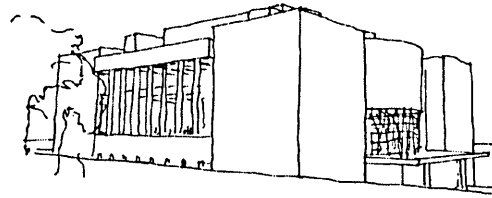
The following pages document my final thesis design. The final building attempts to draw upon the best ideas from existing Mormon temples while embodying innovative approaches to the demarcation of sacred space and the arrangement of the spaces of ritual.

It is not my intention for this final design to represent an actual finished temple. This building was designed as a prototype and not a model. In other words, this building has been the vehicle to explore architectural issues as they relate to the temple and the final form of the building is important only to the point that it provides a map of how to organize the spaces of ritual in relation to each other. As a prototype one could take the general organization of this temple and scale it down depending on the needs of the community in which it is built. I did not address the issues of materiality but again this could be decided based on available materials and local culture. The exterior form is neutral. It is not associated with any particular culture but rather is the natural expression of the arrangement of the interior spaces. In some ways this design can be seen as the Mormon equivalent to the Basilica plan. The Basilica plan is the building type which individuals have altered with endless imagination to create variations in their churches for centuries. Similarly, this temple is meant to indicate a possible temple building

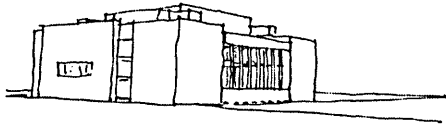
type that could be altered and built in many ways. What would be clear, however, in any model derived from the type would be the symbolic origin of the form and the logical arrangement of the spaces of ritual.



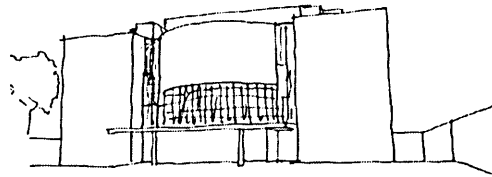
Northwest view.



Southeast view.



Southwest view.



East view.

Exterior and Entry

The temple as proposed is based on the symbolic joining of the square and the circle. The temple is oriented by the cardinal directions with the main entry on the East. The exterior walls of the temple are derivatives of the square and are symbolic of the four corners of the world. Each façade is unique indicating the distinct nature of the major rooms behind. The building is sunken in the earth indicating that it is rooted and part of the earth. The building is also sunken in the earth to symbolically suggest that part of the ritual within is related to that which is buried (baptism and work for the dead). Around the temple is a deep gap that helps to further define the layers of sacred space. This gap also allows one to see how the temple is rooted down in the earth. The entry plaza also allows for the demarcation of sacred zones.

Approach to the temple is from the north and is directed around the west and south sides of the building thus allowing the patron to comprehend the exterior organization of the building prior to entry. On the east the patron descends a large ramp to the entry plaza. The eastern façade of the temple is framed by the massive earth walls rising up out of the ground. Supported between the two walls is a cylindrical form pushing beyond the edges of the earth walls. Below this cylinder

is a veil-like curtain wall which conceals yet allows for glimpses of the spherical form which appears to be moving into the temple. The cylinder and the sphere are derivatives of the circle and one could immediately discern that the spaces within those forms have a more sacred nature in contrast to the rest of the square exterior. The roof of the entry is a plane that represents the ground, thus reminding the patron that they have descended and are entering the temple below grade. The glass entry area forms the bridge that floats over the gap surrounding the entire temple.

Lobby

The entry lobby and the temple interior are separated by a curved desk and wall. The desk lies on the perimeter of the temple as defined by the exterior earth walls. It is at this desk that one presents his or her temple recommend or permission slip from their local ecclesiastical leaders which affirms the patron's worthiness to enter the temple and participate in the ordinances. The curved wall behind the desk is an indication again of the sacred nature of the work beyond. This wall also helps to divide and indicate that men and women will be separated for a time. Beyond the curved wall is the waiting area where temple patrons may wait for others following their participation in the ceremonies.

As temple patrons move down the corridors flanking the waiting area they see ahead of them curved translucent walls. These walls glow from behind, suggestive of a lighter space behind them. Patrons also see shadows and blurred forms moving up behind the walls. Thus, the idea is that as the patron enters the temple and before doing anything else they are given a veiled and blurred glimpse of light and activity in the heart of the temple. In front of these translucent walls two curving stairways descend down to the font area. If the patron has come to do baptisms then they would proceed down to the font level of the temple. I will return to this path or circulation route later.

Changing Areas/Washing and Anointing Rooms

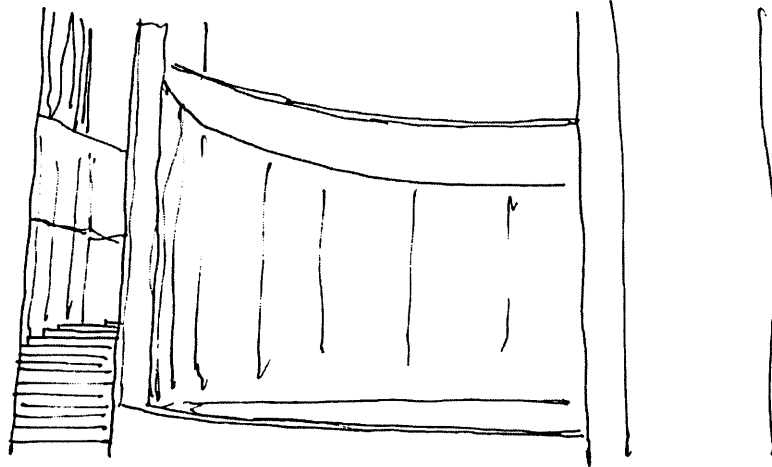
The curved translucent walls indicate movement to the left or right. Men and women separate and move to the clothing distribution rooms. Here they may rent special temple clothing to be used in the ceremonies if they have not brought their own. After receiving their clothing the patrons enter their respective male and female changing areas. The changing areas are lit artificially and naturally from windows along the exterior walls. The patrons change into their white clothing symbolic of purity and equality preparatory to participating in the endowment ceremony. If patrons wish to perform washings and anointings then they may enter the rooms set apart for this ordinance located adjacent to the temple's central space.

It should be mentioned here that I organized the programmatic elements of the building according to their relationship to the divine. If one assumes that the circle symbolizes divine space and is at the very center of the building then everything that is mundane or having to do with the world is pushed to the exterior or into the rectangular spaces around the center. Thus, the changing areas, restrooms, kitchen and laundry all occupy spaces around the perimeter of the temple.

Chapel and Central Atrium

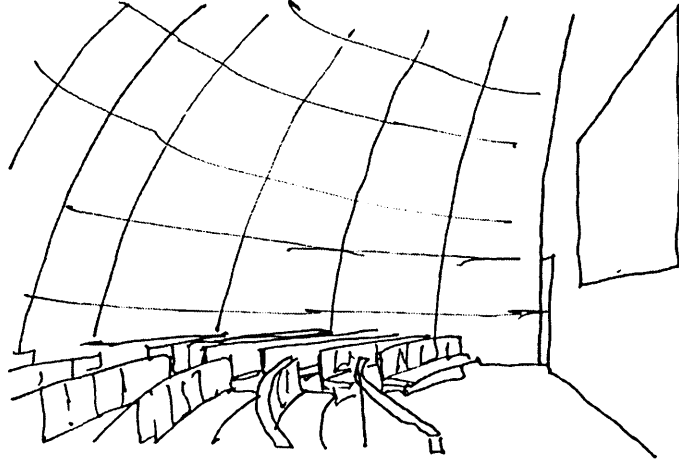
After a patron has changed clothing they move into the chapel to congregate prior to starting the ritual movement through the endowment ceremony. The chapel is adjacent to the central space of the temple. Light enters the chapel from the central space. Physically the chapel space is defined by surrounding walls and glass doors at the front of the room. Visually, however, the chapel space extends into the central area of the temple and is defined by the backside of the translucent walls seen from the temple entry area.

As the group of temple patrons leaves the chapel to begin the endowment ceremony they move into the central open space of the temple. From this space the patrons are presented with a grand spatial experience, one that allows them to see the relationship of the beginning of the ordinances to the end. From this large central space the patron is able to look down to the font below. The font is located at the very center at the lowest level of the temple. If the patron looks up they see an opaque circle floating in a ring of light. Most of the light in the central space comes from this ring. Across this ring of light the patron sees the periodic movement of shadows from above indicating that the space is occupied. This is the Celestial Room of the temple. Upon



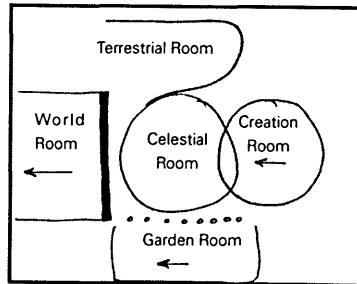
Central atrium open to font below and
stair leading up to the Creation Room.

entering the central open space the patron is made aware of the axial relationship between the font and the Celestial Room. Ahead are stairs that wrap up in between the curved translucent walls to the endowment level of the temple.



The Creation Room.

Creation Room



relation to center.

As I mentioned earlier, I arranged the spaces associated with the ritual according to their relationship to the divine. Each of the following endowment spaces took their architectural clues from the identification of that relationship. For example, within the Creation Room patrons learn about the creation. The creation was an event in which God participated. Thus, the room is attached to the central space. The form of the room is derived from the circle and the idea of outer space. Once inside the room the curving walls of the spherical space indicate their continuation into the central space. Seating within the Creation Room is divided yet oriented to the divine, symbolic of the creation of Adam (man) and Eve (woman) as individuals not yet joined together. The room is dark and provides a closed, intimate association with the doctrines presented concerning the creation. After the creation portion of the endowment film the patrons are introduced into the Garden Room, symbolic of the place where Adam and Eve dwelt.

I should mention here that in addition to the actual rooms associated with the different periods represented in the endowment I was particularly interested in what it would be like to move from one space to the next. Is that division marked by just a wall or is it perhaps a larger

path-like space which prepares the patron for the next world? I decided to explore the latter option and make the transition from one room to the next an experience in and of itself.

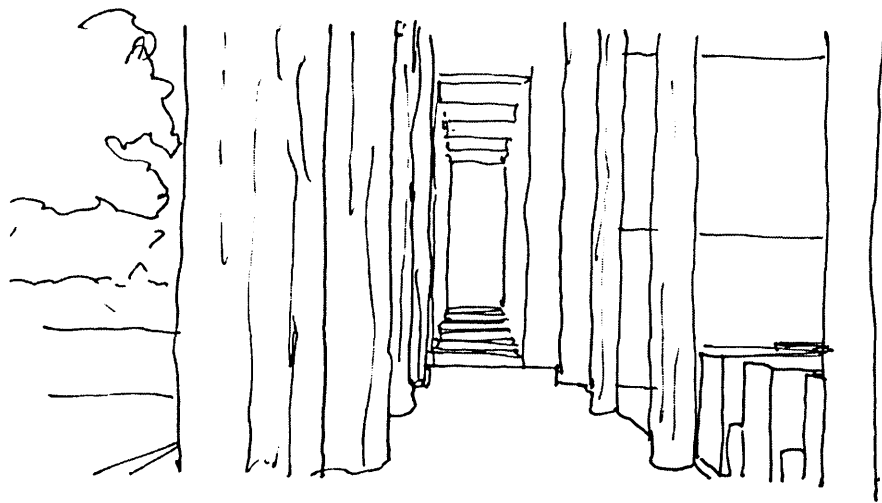
The patrons exit the Creation Room through doors in the back wall. They exit into a corridor defined by the curtain wall suspended from the cylinder seen from the entry and the outside surface of the Creation Room. The curved wall of the Creation Room guides the patrons to a set of stairs that lead them seven feet up to the Garden Room.



The Garden Room.

Garden Room

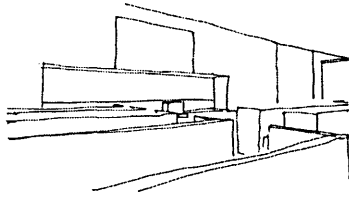
The patrons enter the Garden Room from the rear and move into the room along the north colonnade. In the Garden Room men and women sit segregated yet together in one large set of pews. The relationship of the Garden Room to the central space is porous, suggestive of the separation yet close communication between God and Adam and Eve while in the Garden. The large rectangular space is defined by rows of columns along its lengths. The columns along the southern side physically separate the interior from the exterior. These columns are also suggestive, however, of the trunks of trees in the Garden. One of the issues that I had wanted to explore in this thesis was the possibility of opening up the temple to the outside. Rather than painting murals on the wall, why not remove the wall and allow for the Garden to extend visually into a real garden. Thus, in this room I decided to physically define the room with columns but allow for a visual connection to a forest of trees and garden setting outside. Privacy could be accomplished by both the density of natural growth, seclusion of the exterior garden space or by drawing curtains during the presentation of the endowment film.



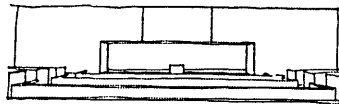
Garden Colonnade leading into the corner and to the World Room.

The Garden Room is large and is connected visually to the Celestial Room by light coming from the latter. The seating area is made more intimate by erecting a trellis suggestive of the canopy of trees in the Garden. Seating is oriented parallel to the center space toward the altar at the end of the room.

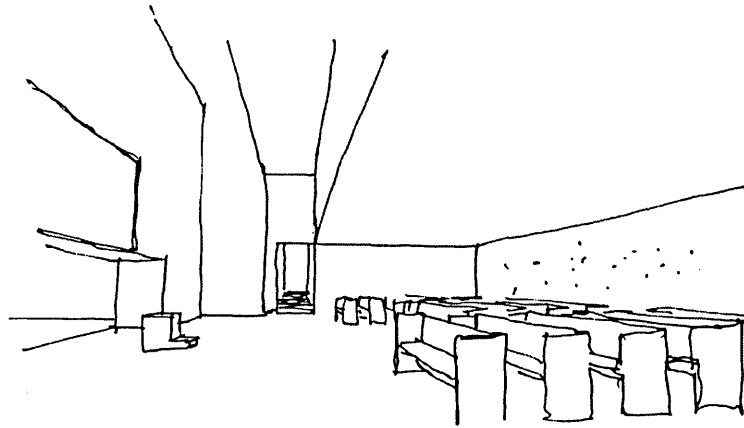
After the Garden portion of the endowment patrons are expelled from this room into the World Room. This is symbolic of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden into the world. The actual path for this expulsion takes the patrons into the corridor along the southern edge of the Garden Room. From here they are led into the corner of the building up another flight of stairs seven feet and then into the World Room. Moving the patrons into the corner is symbolic of distancing themselves from God or the divine central space of the temple and is appropriate when one remembers that these massive walls are symbolic of the earth.



World Room view.

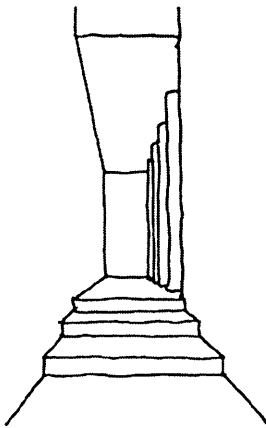


World Room view from seating area.



World Room view as entered from the Garden Room.

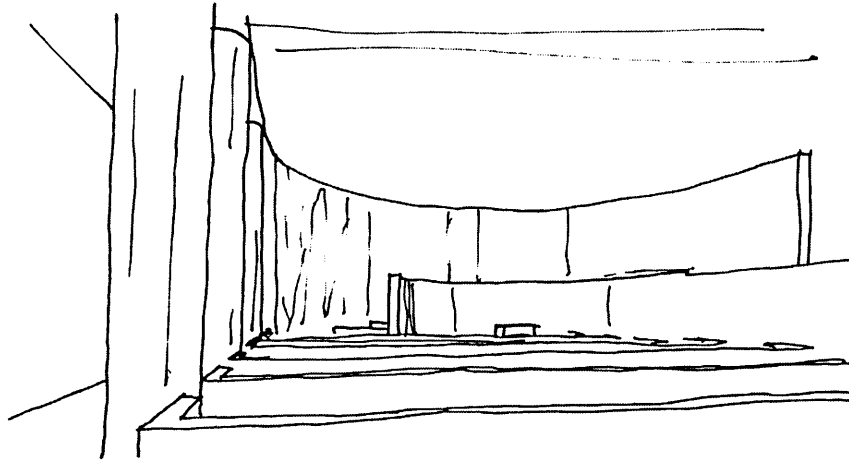
World Room



View of the Terrestrial Room as entered from the World Room.

Upon arrival in the World Room, the patron notices immediately the sparseness of decoration and detail. The room is large but is perceptively flatter or more planar than the Garden Room. The seating is oriented away from the center of the temple and isolated within the larger volume. The massive wall on the West has been pushed out and away from the center, breaking the perimeter created by the temple's corners. Within this wall a long window has been cut to allow for a view out of the temple into the real world. The window is not very high but is long, again reinforcing the planar quality of the world in which we live. The altar of this room stands in front of the window suggesting that one needs to limit the distractions of the world and focus on the truths being presented. Along the back wall there are only small perforations to allow limited amounts of light to filter in from the central space. This is symbolic of the idea from the Bible that the amount of light in the world is comparable to that which comes from the stars.

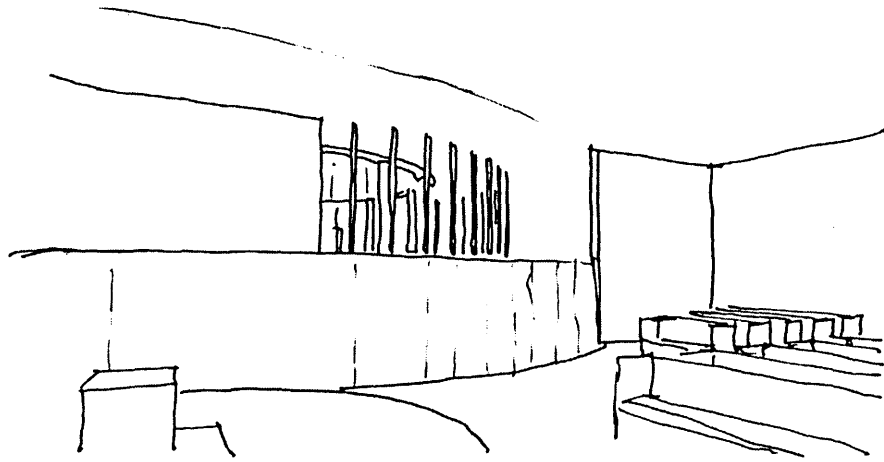
After the World Room portion of the endowment the patrons are led into the northwest corner of the temple up another flight of stairs to the Terrestrial Room. Introduction into the corner again is symbolic of bringing one's life into conformity with the commandments of God preparatory to entering the Terrestrial World.



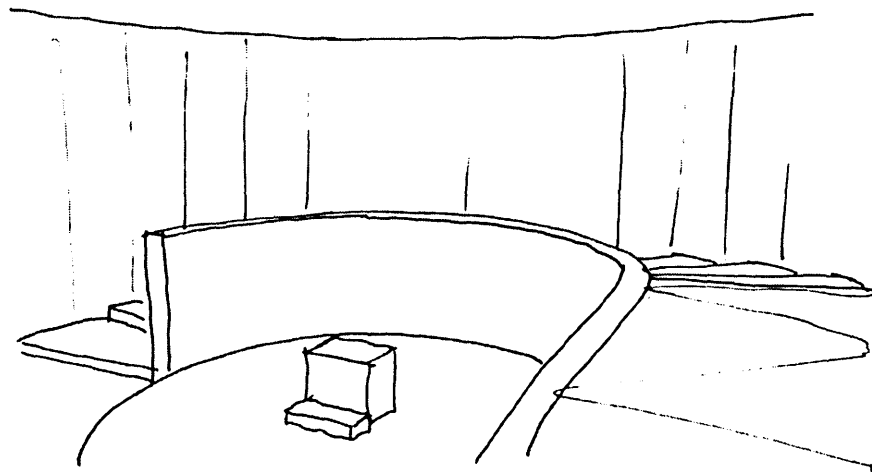
View of the Terrestrial Room from the rear.

Terrestrial Room

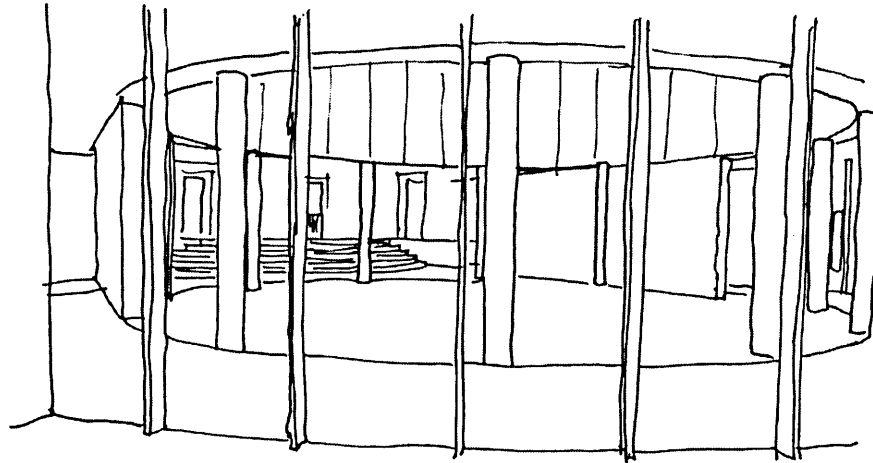
The Terrestrial Room represents a paradisiacal state of existence that will be experienced during the Millennium. It is similar to returning to the Garden of Eden. Patrons enter the Terrestrial Room from the rear corner and pass through the large columns. These columns are architectural remnants or clues of this room's association with the Garden Room. This room is rectangular at the rear but along its southern and eastern sides begins to curve. This curving is symbolic of the influence of the center space upon this room. To the front and along the southern edge of the room a translucent curtain hangs defining the space of the Terrestrial Room yet dividing it from the Celestial Room. The altar space of the Terrestrial Room is defined by a circular platform and wrapping wall around the rear of the altar. The curtain mentioned earlier drops from the ceiling and meets the top of this semi-circular wall. The circular definition of the altar space allows for the ceremonial formation of the prayer circle. At a certain time in the endowment ceremony the dividing curtain is drawn back revealing the definition of a larger Terrestrial Room and the veil which separates it from the Celestial Room. Patrons are led up another curved stairway which wraps around the altar space to the floor of the Celestial Room.



View of the Terrestrial Room altar and into the Celestial area.



View of the Terrestrial Room altar and stairs from the veil.

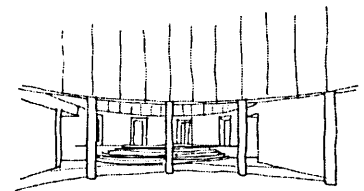


View of the Celestial Room through the veil space.

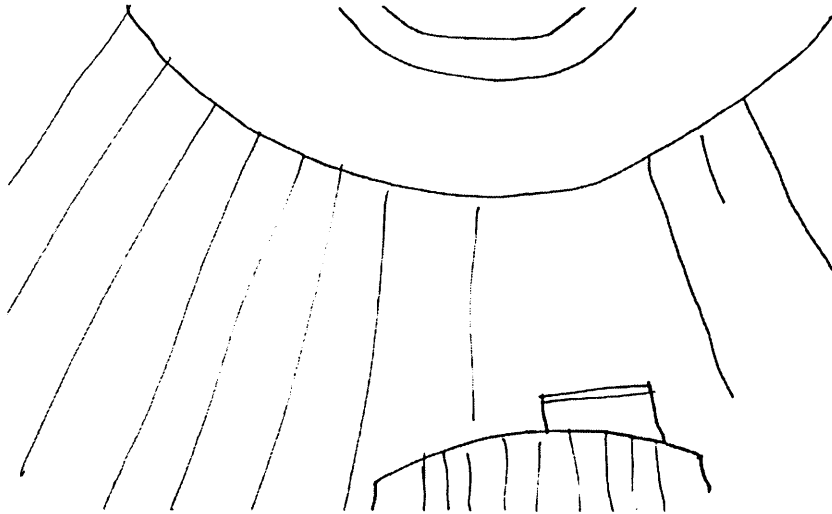
Celestial Room

Before entering the Celestial Room the patrons are presented at the veil of temple. Here the patrons are tested to determine if they have learned what is required to enter the presence of God. The patrons are led through the veil across the translucent ring, seen from the font and chapel area in the central space below, into the Celestial Room.

The Celestial Room is defined by a pure cylinder and cables that hang from the cylinder to support the Celestial Room floor. The ceilings of each of the rooms leading up to the Celestial Room have been compressed more and more. Now when the patron arrives in this room the ceiling is removed and one has a view to the sky. This is the most light-filled room in the temple and is symbolic of being in the presence of God. Arrival in this space concludes the endowment ceremony. While the circular Celestial Room is defined by the cylinder overhead, a portion of the room extends to the East and ends at the lobby of the Sealing Rooms. Thus, the Celestial Room and Sealing Rooms are connected visually and spatially. The patrons may remain in the Celestial Room to talk quietly, meditate or pray. When they have finished they move toward the Sealing Rooms and then men and women divide and move into the northeast and southeast corners to descend back down to the changing areas.



View of the Celestial Room looking toward the sealing rooms.

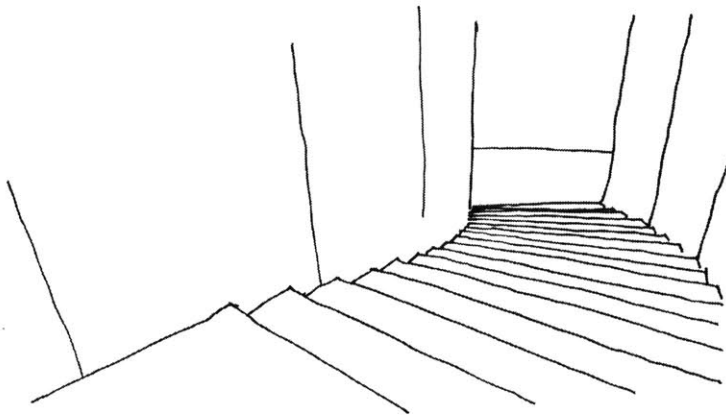


Upward view of sealing room .

Sealing Rooms

As discussed earlier the Sealing Rooms are the location of the crowning ordinances of the temple. It is in these rooms that men and women are married for time and eternity. In addition children who were born prior to the sealing of a husband and wife may be sealed to them. In this way families are united forever. By performing this ordinance for deceased relatives the whole human family is linked together.

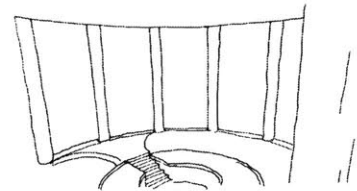
The circular form and the arrangement of these rooms are symbolic of the association with God in the creative process. They are located in the cylinder seen from the entry. This form is pushing beyond the confines of the temple and is symbolic of the potential for all individuals to become like God. Each of the rooms has an opening in the ceiling and encapsulates the diagram of the temple in miniature. Thus, at the end of all the ordinances one is reminded through the architecture of the overall purpose of the temple.



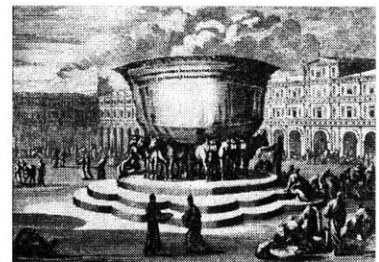
View from the waiting area down to the font.

Baptismal Font

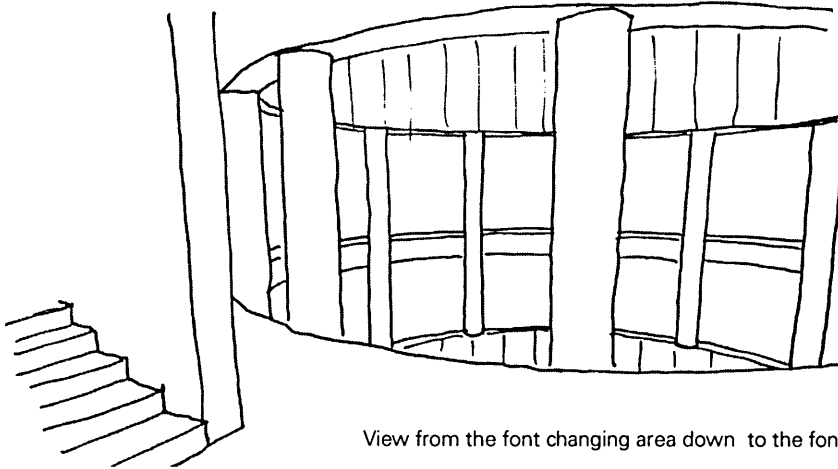
If the temple patrons desire to perform baptisms then they proceed down the circular flight of stairs by the translucent walls in the waiting area of the lobby. As the patrons move down the stairs they are afforded glimpses of the columns surrounding the font area. At the bottom of the stairs the patrons enter their respective male and female changing rooms to dress in baptismal clothing. Once dressed the patrons assemble in the chapel to await their turn in the font. The chapel is a double height space that faces the font. Patrons enter the chapel from the rear and step down to their respective seats to await their turn. While seated the patrons have a full view of the font and the twelve oxen that support the font on their backs. The oxen are symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel and are reminiscent of the bulls that supported the molten sea in Solomon's Temple. Three bulls face each of the cardinal directions. This orientation to the north, south, east and west is significant because it forms the basis for the organization of the rest of the temple.



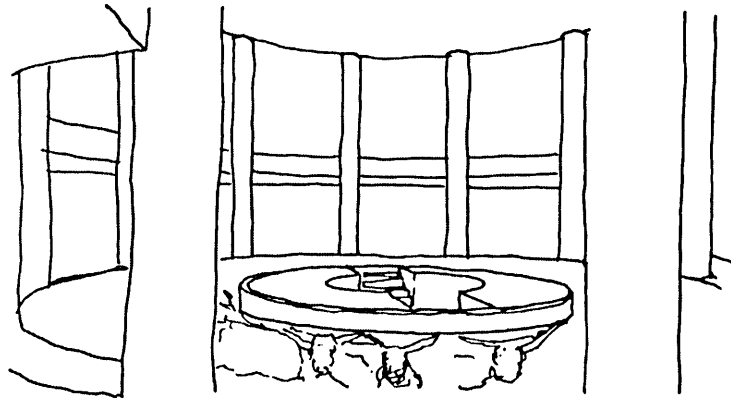
View from the font changing area down to the font.



138.1 Oxen bear the brazen sea on their shoulders in the Temple of Solomon.



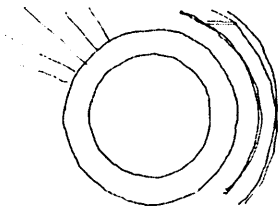
View from the font changing area down to the font..



View of the font from the chapel seating area.

There are also twelve columns around the font space reaching up toward the light from above. As the patron enters the water in the font they are able to look up and see the light and circular forms above. At this point the patron understands that they are participating in the first of a sequence of ordinances which will lead them toward the light.

Upward view from the font of the bottom of the Celestial Room and ring of light.

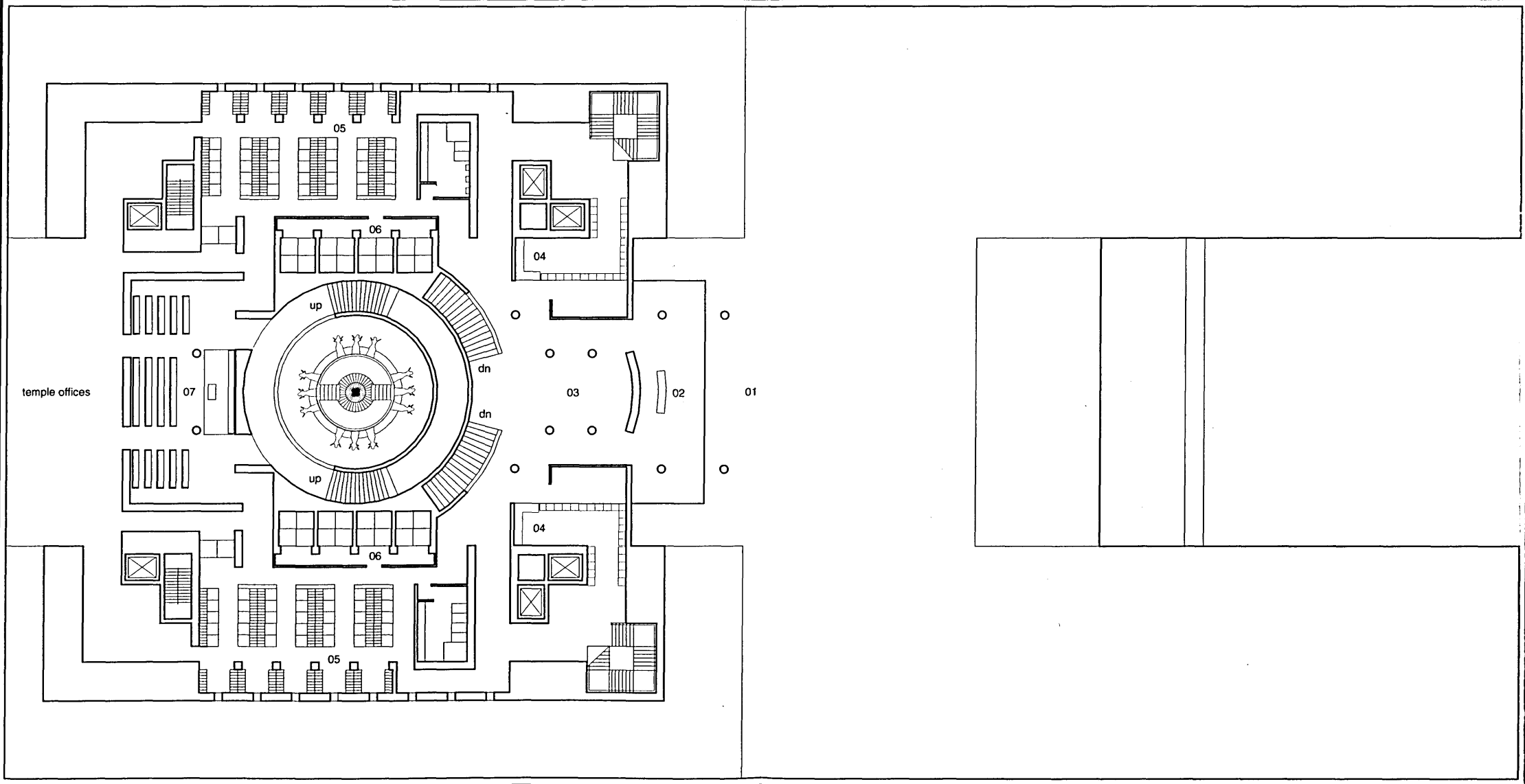


Following the baptism the patron, in wet clothing, exits to the East and climbs the stairs into their respective changing area. The laundry is located conveniently behind the changing areas and one floor below the clothing distribution area. After the patrons have changed back into their street clothing they are confirmed by men holding the priesthood in rooms adjacent to the chapel. Following their confirmation they ascend back up the stairs to the waiting area where they may leave the temple or continue on to the endowment ceremony.

The following pages contain the plans and sections of the finished design.

Main Level

SCALE 1"=1/32"

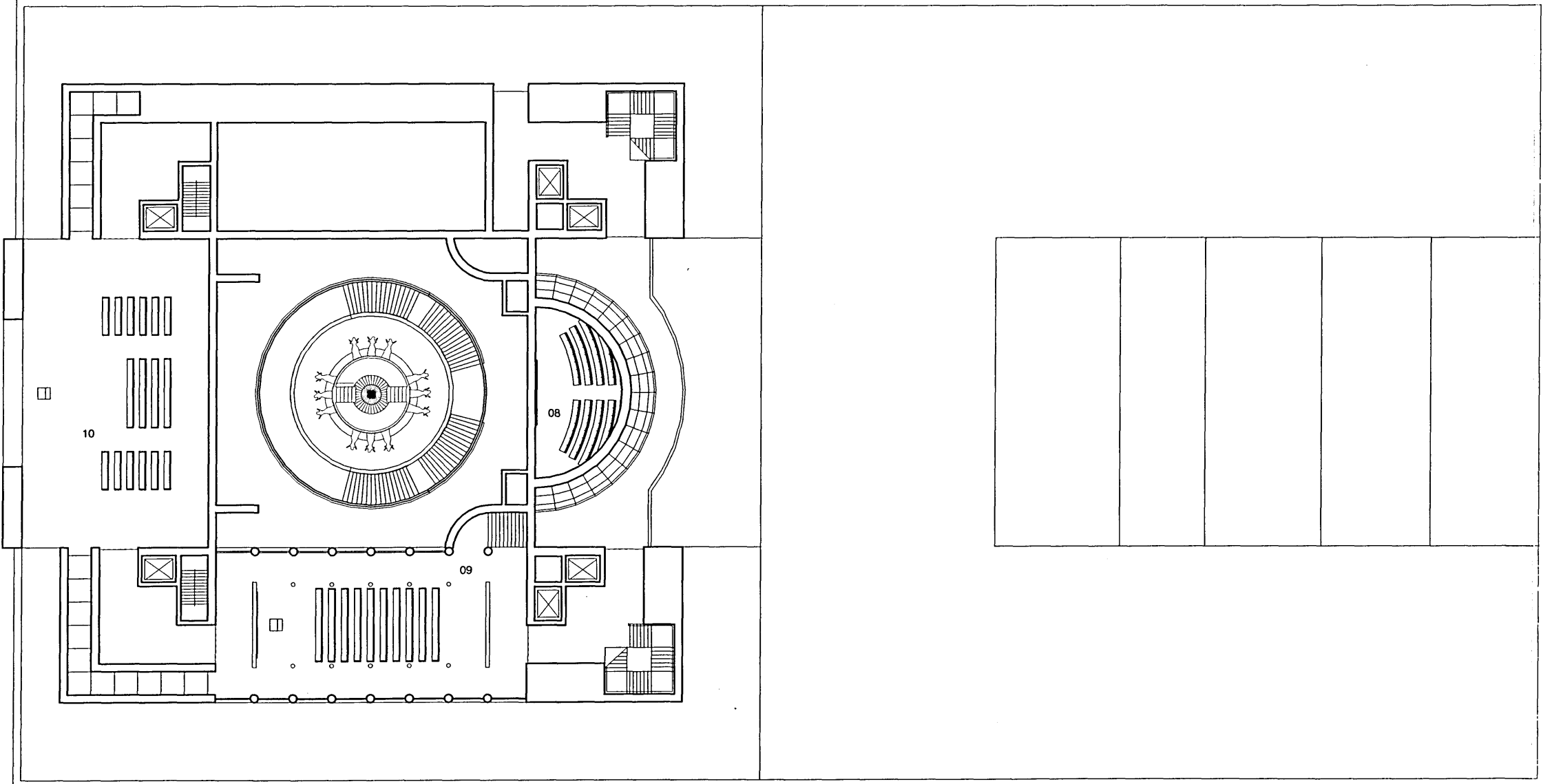


legend

- 01 Entry
- 02 Recommend Desk
- 03 Lobby
- 04 Clothing Distribution
- 05 Men's Changing Area
- Women's Changing Area
- 06 Washing & Anointing Area
- 07 Chapel

Endowment Level

SCALE 1'=1/32"



legend

- 08 Creation Room + 16 ft
- 09 Garden Room + 23 ft
- 10 World Room + 30 ft

Celestial Level

SCALE 1'=1/32"

legend

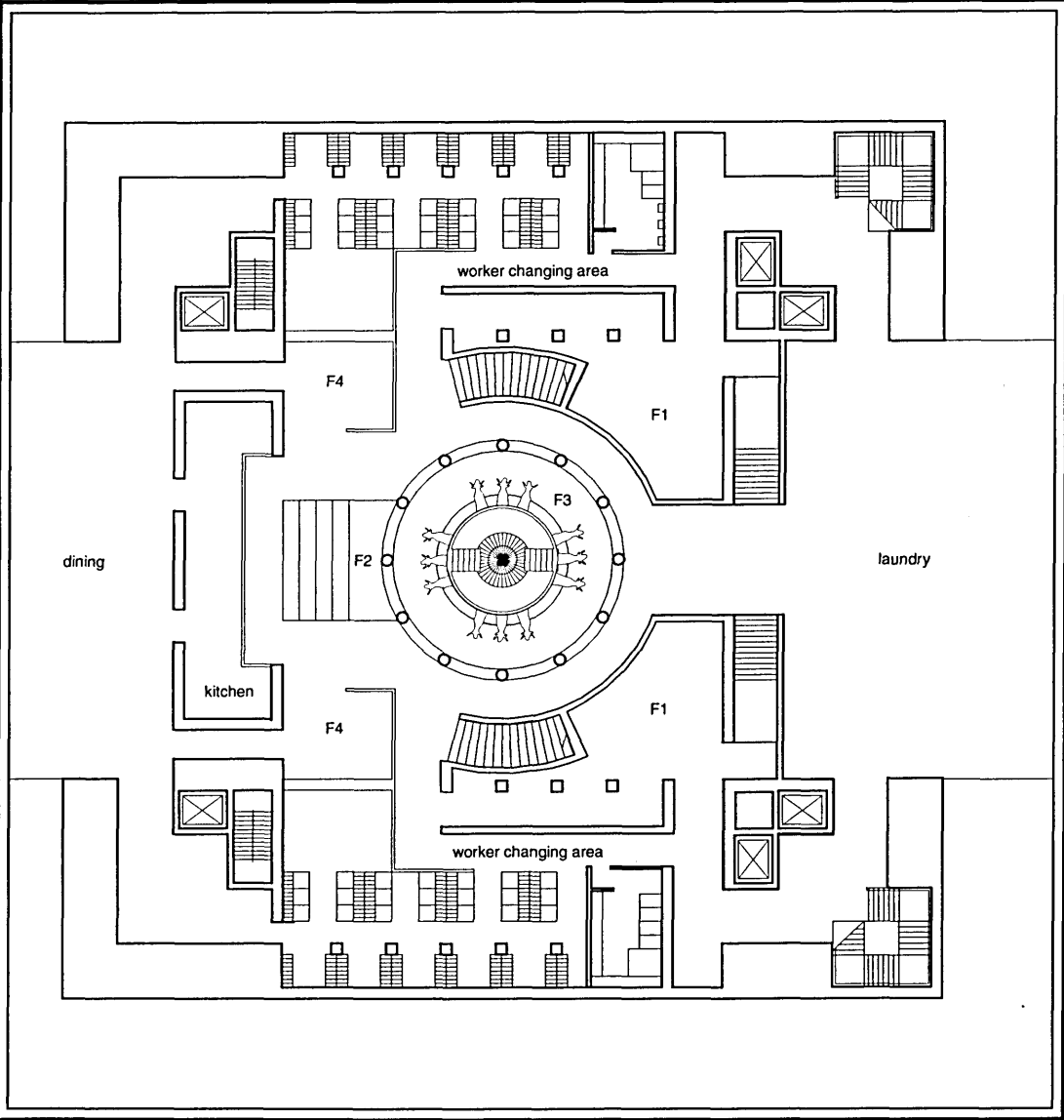
- | | | |
|----|------------------|---------|
| 11 | Terrestrial Room | + 37 ft |
| 12 | Celestial Room | + 44 ft |
| 13 | Sealing Rooms | + 47 ft |

Font Level

SCALE 1'=1/32"

legend

- F1 Baptism Changing Area
- F2 Chapel
- F3 Font
- F4 Confirmation Room

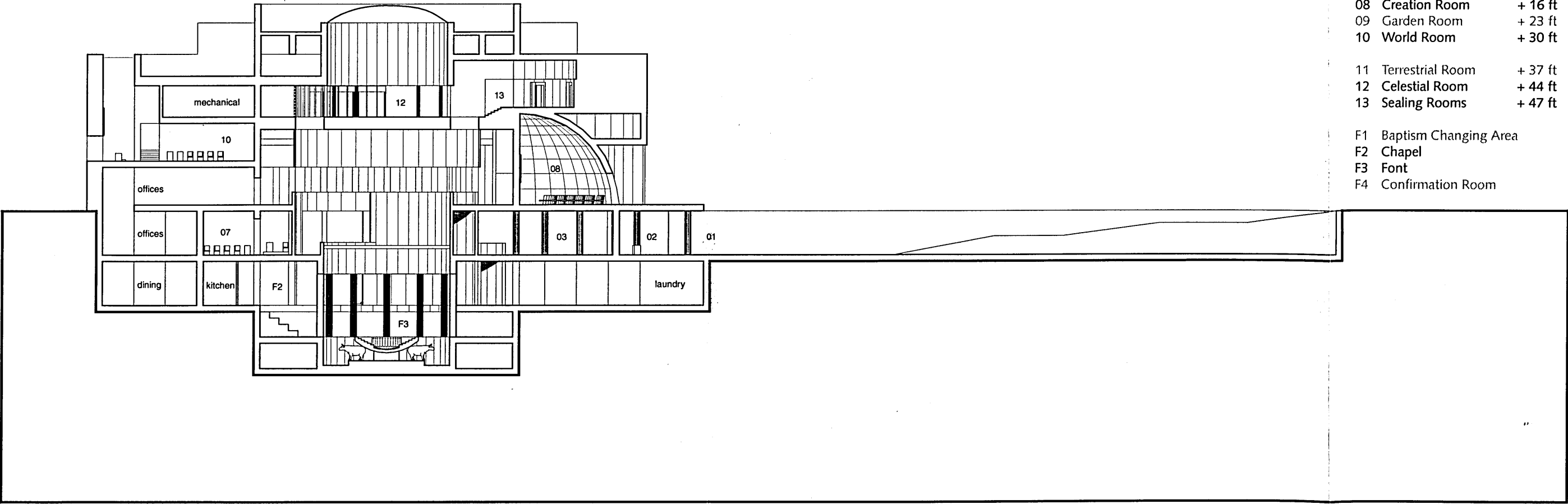


W - E Section

SCALE 1"=1/32"

legend

- 01 Entry
- 02 Recommend Desk
- 03 Lobby
- 04 Clothing Distribution
- 05 Men's Changing Area
- 06 Women's Changing Area
- 07 Washing & Anointing Area
- 08 Chapel
- 08 Creation Room + 16 ft
- 09 Garden Room + 23 ft
- 10 World Room + 30 ft
- 11 Terrestrial Room + 37 ft
- 12 Celestial Room + 44 ft
- 13 Sealing Rooms + 47 ft
- F1 Baptism Changing Area
- F2 Chapel
- F3 Font
- F4 Confirmation Room



S - N Section

SCALE 1"=1/32"

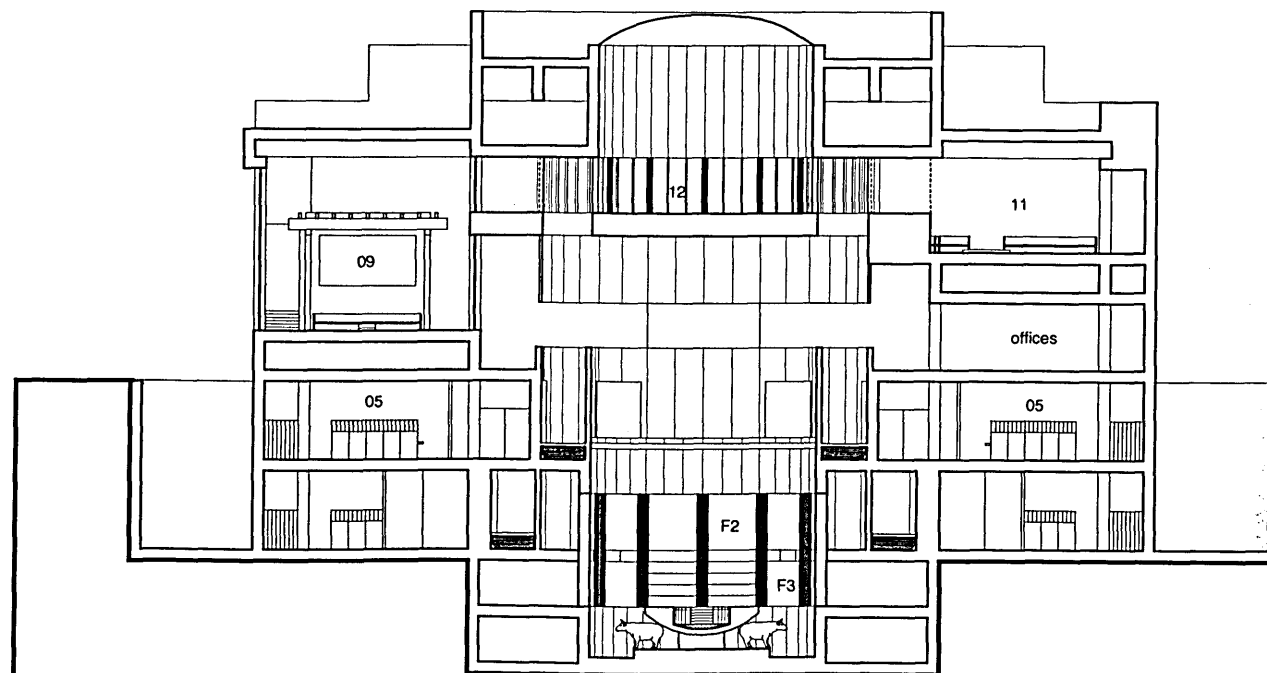
legend

- 01 Entry
- 02 Recommend Desk
- 03 Lobby
- 04 Clothing Distribution
- 05 Men's Changing Area
Women's Changing Area
- 06 Washing & Anointing Area
- 07 Chapel

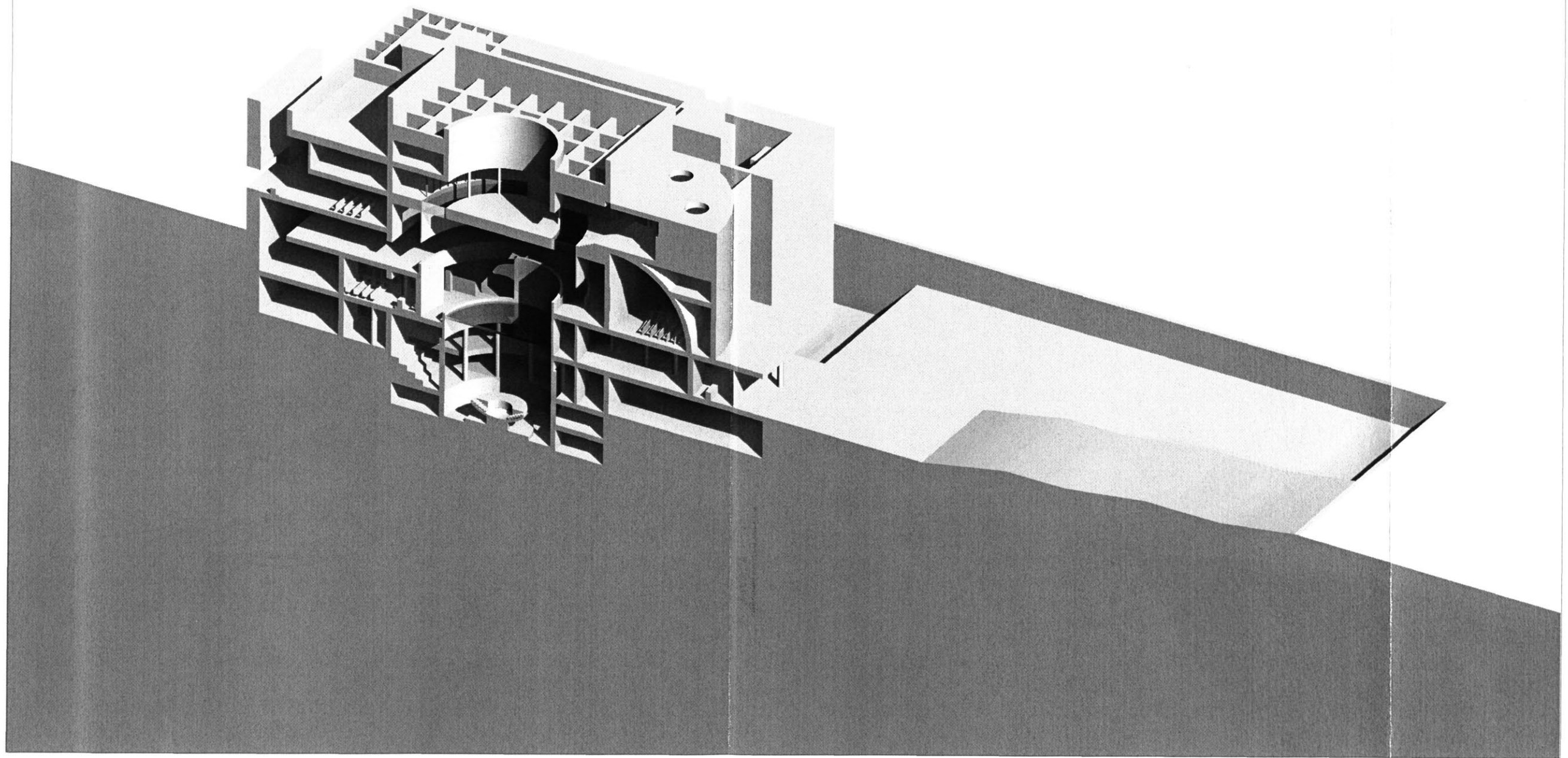
- 08 Creation Room + 16 ft
- 09 Garden Room + 23 ft
- 10 World Room + 30 ft

- 11 Terrestrial Room + 37 ft
- 12 Celestial Room + 44 ft
- 13 Sealing Rooms + 47 ft

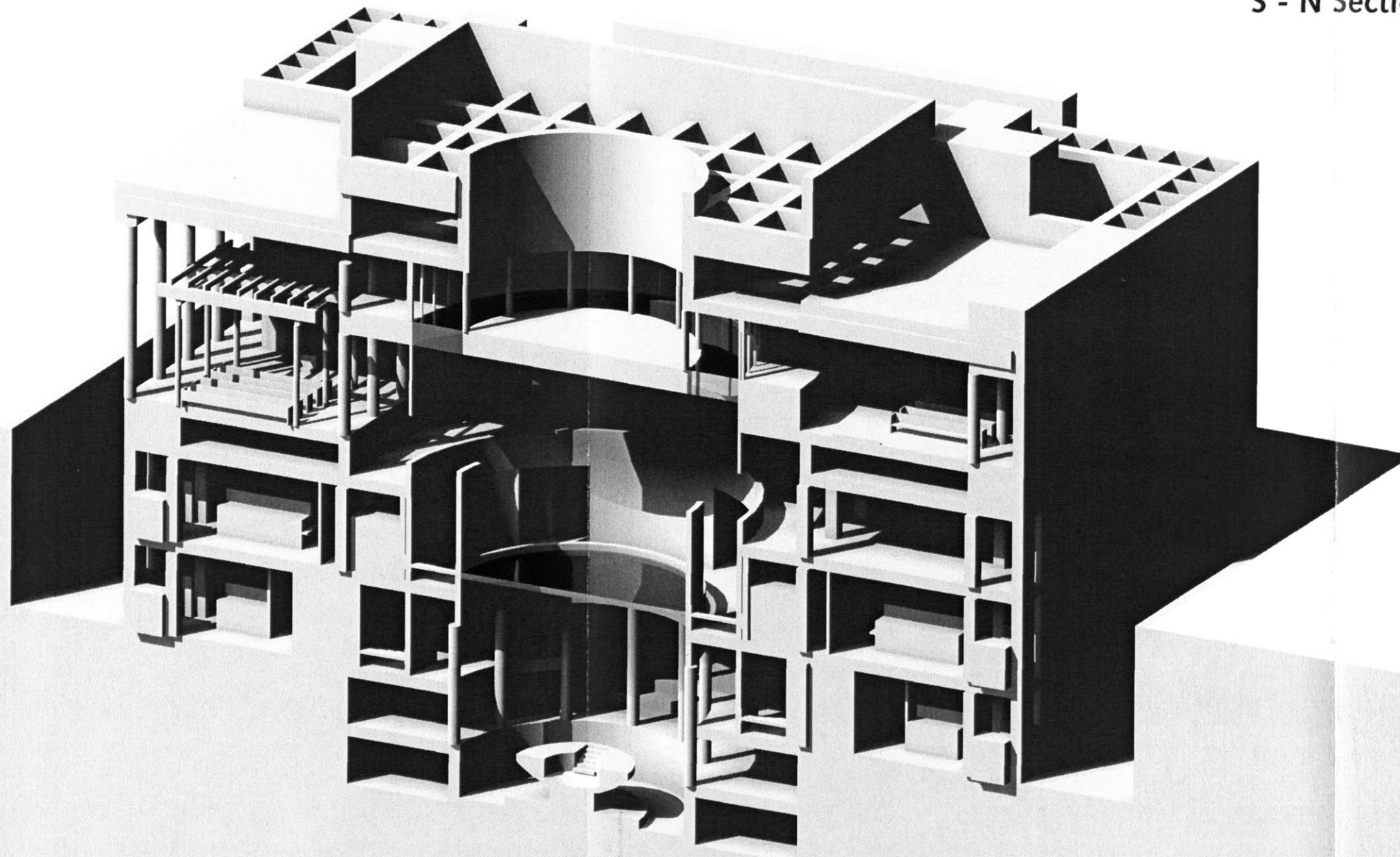
- F1 Baptism Changing Area
- F2 Chapel
- F3 Font
- F4 Confirmation Room



W - E Section Axonometric



S - N Section Axonometric



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